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CHICAGO LEDGER

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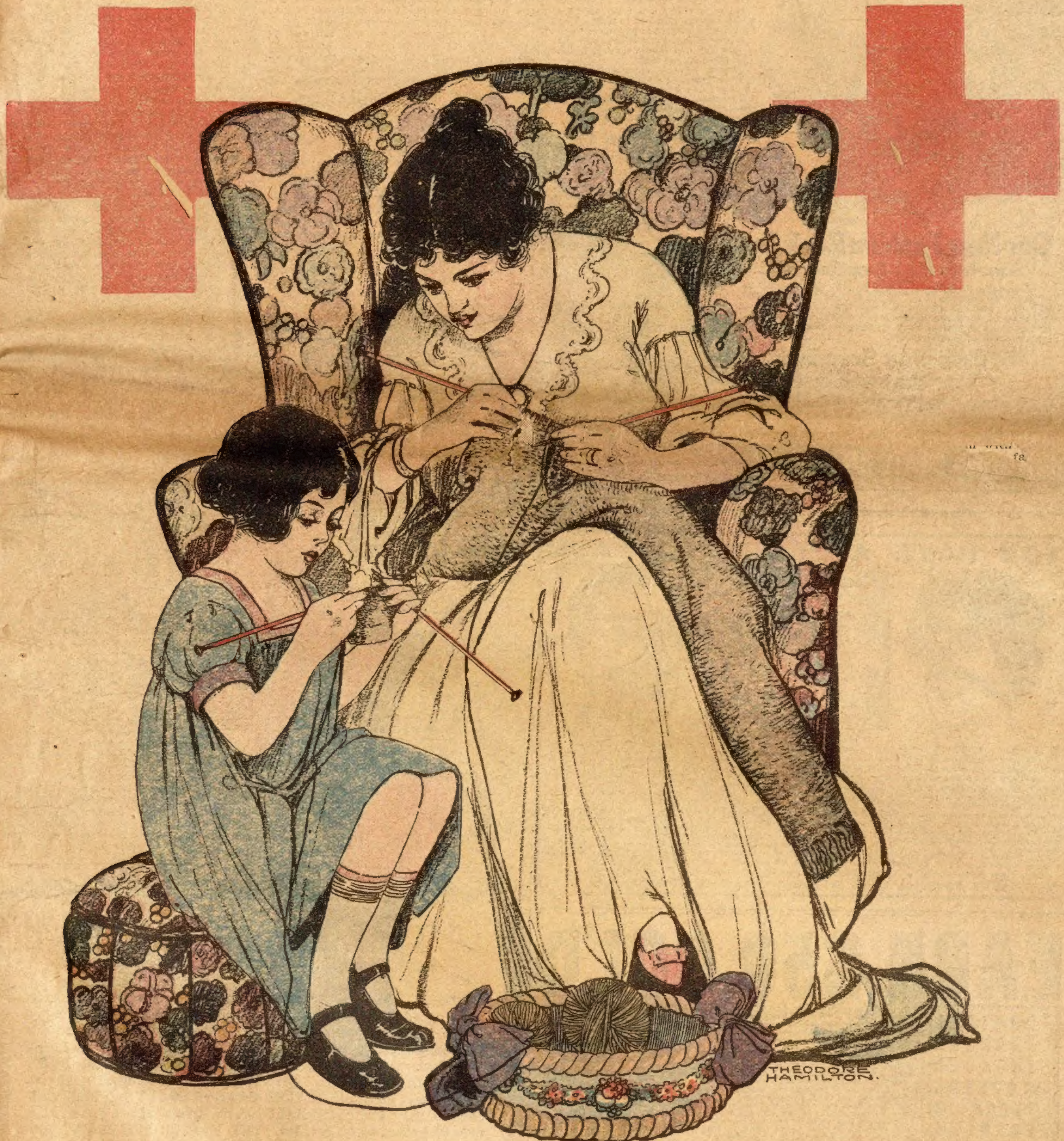

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IN THIS DAY and AGE *attention to your appearance is an absolute necessity if you expect to make the most out of life.* Not only should you wish to appear as attractive as possible, for your own self-satisfaction, which alone is well worth your efforts, but you will find the world in general judging you greatly, if not wholly, by your *"looks,"* therefore it pays to *"look your best"* at all times. PERMIT NO ONE TO SEE YOU LOOKING OTHERWISE: it will injure your welfare! Upon the impression you constantly make rests the failure or success of your life. Which is to be your ultimate destiny? My new *Nose-Shaper*, "TRADOS" (*Model 22*) corrects now ill-shaped noses without operation, *quickly, safely* and *permanently*. It is pleasant and does not interfere with one's daily occupation, being worn at night.

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How Many Words Can You Make

Now here is a puzzle that is a prize winner. You do not have to sit up and work over a dictionary all night. Just a little ingenuity and skill. The puzzle is to get as many words as possible out of the letters herewith given. Use only the letters given and only as many times as they appear. For instance, the letter R appears four times, so in all your words you must not use R more than four times. If you use R twice in one word and twice in another, you cannot use R in another word, as you have already used it as many times as it appears. You do not have to use up all the letters. The puzzle looks simple, but if you can make as many as twelve words, send in your list at once, as the person winning first prize may not have more than that many words.

WHY WE DO IT

We publish the best story paper in America, and we want to send you a sample copy and full particulars of our big contest club. Every new member of our contest club this month receives a Genuine Diamond Stick Pin Free. It does not cost you one cent to join and every member is sure of winning a prize. Show this offer to your friends.

THE OFFER

We are conducting a big prize contest and will give 100 votes in the contest for each word you make. To the person having the most votes at the end of the contest we will give $25 in cash; to the second highest $10; to the third highest $7.50; to the fourth $5 and to the fifth $2.50. In addition we are going to give away hundreds of other valuable prizes too numerous to mention in this advertisement. Contest closes Dec. 22, 1917. Anyone may enter and if you only win the $2.50 prize you are that much ahead. It is certainly worth a little effort, and besides you will receive, absolutely free, a copy of the best story paper published. If there should be a tie between two or more contestants for any of the prizes, each tieing contestant will receive the prize tied for. Write today.

CONTEST EDITOR, 809 Friend Building, Kansas City, Missouri.

TO THE POINT

Our Reasons for War.

BY WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT.

Killing against the law with deliberation is murder, and Germany has been guilty of murder of 200 of our fellow citizens, innocent of any offense, national or international.

The Constitution of the United States is interpreted by the Supreme Court to say the duty of the citizens of the United States is to render allegiance, to do service, to pay taxes, and support the Government, and the corresponding duty of the United States as a Government is to protect the right of citizens of the United States at home and abroad.

In view, therefore, of the murder of these 200 citizens and of the announcement of a policy to continue these murders, what alternative was there left other than a declaration of war to the United States?

Suppose this had been Guatemala that had sunk one of our vessels and sent ten of our sailors to the bottom. How many hours do you think it would be before the President and the Secretary of the Navy would send a battleship down to Guatemala and be thundering at the ports of that republic and demanding restitution, demanding a promise of conduct hereafter, demanding damages for what had been done, and, on failure to answer promptly, beginning a bombardment? Even pacifists would have justified that.

Now, what is the difference between that situation and this? A very great difference, if you understand what it means to consent to the murder of 200 of our citizens because there is a powerful nation you have to meet and overcome in order to vindicate the rights of our citizens.

It means submission to the domination of another power. It means giving up the independence for which we fought in 1776.

In entering the war we are entirely [illegible]oid of offense. We have been forced [illegible] The situation has been such that no self-respecting nation, no nation which appreciates what a government is formed for, could avoid doing what we are doing when the rights of our citizens, the preservation of which is the chief object of government, have been defiantly violated by a power that rests for its right upon might. That is why we are in.

The issue at present is drawn between the democracies of the world and the military dynasties, and people like to characterize that as the issue. It is and it isn't. What I mean is this:

The United States is not a knight-errant country going about to independent people and saying, "We do not like your form of government; we have tried our own and think it is better for you and you have got to take it."

But when their form of government involves a policy which does not confine its opinions to the people who make the government or support it, but becomes a visible policy against the welfare and happiness of the rest of the world family, we have a right and a duty, standing with other nations, to see to it that such a policy is stopped forever.

This militarism is a cancer which must be cut out by a surgical operation. It shows its malignant character in the utter disregard for the rules of war. It showed itself in the violation of Belgium, in the policy of frightfulness in order to subjugate Belgium, in the violation of the Hague treaties. It is a cancer which would absorb the wholesome life of the whole world unless it is cut out and necessitates suffering and pain in ridding the world of it.

❧

FROM THE REAR.

Free speech in time of war has this difference from free speech in time of peace, that certain kinds of speech in time of war carry death with them, says the New York Times. They cease to be words and become bullets. Attacks on the Government and on the people that are carrying on the war serve to thwart the aim of the war, which is to defeat the enemy and to avoid defeat for ourselves. If they were successful they would cost the lives of thousands of American soldiers who would otherwise come home safe and sound. If they are partly successful they will cost the lives of fewer soldiers than if they were completely successful, but they will still sacrifice many unnecessarily. To be concrete, if these attacks accomplish their purpose of convincing Russia that we are not united, and hence of withdrawing her from the war, they will destroy the lives of hundreds of thousands of Americans by prolonging the war. If they are only partly successful and merely serve to confirm and prolong Russia's irresolution without actually detaching her from our side, they will destroy the lives of a less number, but still of a great many, who would otherwise come home to their families.

❧

STRIKING STATUE.

In one of the old Greek cities there stood long ago a statue. Every trace of it has vanished now. But there is still in existence a conversation which [illegible] us an excellent description of it, a[illegible] we read the words we can surel[illegible] cover the lesson which those w[illegible] Greeks meant that the stat[illegible]ould teach to every passer-by.

The interview is in the form of a conversation between a traveler and the statue: "What is thy name, O statue?" "I am called Opportunity." "Who made thee?" "Lysippus." "Why art thou on thy toes?" "To show that I stay but a moment." "Why hast thou wings on thy feet?" "To show how quickly I pass by." "But why is thy hair so long on thy forehead?" "That men may seize me when they meet me." "Why, then, is thy head so bald behind?" "To show that when I have once passed I cannot be caught."

❧

Lots of men who raised war gardens are now preparing to continue doing their duty by raising calluses carrying guns in the reserve militia.

—

Keeping the people ignorant of the facts is the German formula for keeping the people in subjection. It seems to have been adopted by many German language newspapers of America in their relations with their readers.

—

America is fighting for a righteous peace. Loyal Americans will have no other peace at any price.

—

That stanch upholder of the rights of the workingman, W. Hohenzollern, German Kaiser and walking delegate of the Mittel Europa union, will certainly appreciate the assistance being rendered him by the I. W. W.

To Ledger Readers

THE LEDGER issue of next week will be an exceptionally good one. An interesting aeroplane picture will occupy the front page, there will be a complete novelette by Hapsburg Liebe, entitled, "THE WHITE CABALLERO," a thrilling Mexican story. "THE KAISER'S SPY" and "HER DUAL LIFE" will be continued. Several highly interesting short stories will appear, among them "THE ORANGE COAT" and "CASSIE'S MAN-TRAP" and "THE BALLOONIST DOG;" also a remarkable detective short story, entitled, "THE MASTER POISONER." Another installment of "THE SIX CORNERS BOYS" will appear, together with a whole lot of humor and departments. Look out for "LAZARRE, THE LOST KING," by Mary Hartwell Catherwood, and some of the best stories ever written. They are on the way.

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VOL. XLV. CHICAGO, ILL., OCTOBER 6, 1917. No. 40.

LADY OF THE ROAD

By Willard Hawkins

How two lovers muddled thru a tangled nightmare of love and jewelry and jealousy and found something like a rainbow at the end.

SO IT was all off. Lee Shoreham clambered into his car with the sensations of a man who has reached the pinnacle of disillusionment—of one in whom nothing further will produce the slightest emotional reaction. Particularly about women would it have been difficult to give Lee pointers. Even Lois Stanfield—even Lois—was not above petty jealousy. And all because—what was the cause, anyway?

His rather muddled impression was that some officious acquaintance had seen him in Schwalbe's jewelry establishment that morning, and had lost no time in reporting to Lois that he seemed greatly interested in the telephone operator. A casual—a very casual—inquiry from Lois had led him unsuspectingly into the admission that she was the same girl that Lois had once observed riding with him in his machine. He had cheerfully divulged the further information that her name was Rita Lorraine, and that for certain reasons he was taking her under his protecting wing—when he came to a sudden realization that the atmosphere was growing decidedly frigid.

It must be admitted that he did not show any noticeable amount of tact in trying to extricate himself from the tangle. No man who prided himself on having a way with women should have said: "Now, Lois, for the love of Mike be reasonable!"

At any rate, he would not have said it to a girl who particularly prided herself on her reasonableness.

"Very well," replied Lois, pale, but drawing her dainty figure up to its full height; "since you insist, I will be reasonable. I'll do what any reasonable person would under the circumstances—return your ring and consider the engagement at an end—unless you choose to explain your relations with this Miss Lorraine."

"But Lois! You can't do that—with the invitations out and the day only three weeks off."

Again Lee should have known better. To Lois, that was simply a challenge. Now, he might have said—but after all, the only point that matters is that Lee's system was N. G.

"Did I understand you that I can't break the engagement, Mr. Lee S.? Well, that is exactly what I shall do. Far better a brief humiliation than a lifelong mistake."

"Just because I can't betray a confidence?"

"I don't ask you to betray a confidence," she assured him, precisely. "I only ask how you happen to have such confidences with a girl of her class."

"But how can I explain that without——"

"It is entirely unnecessary to go over that again."

Lee swallowed. "If I had known that you were capable of such unreasonable jealousy, such——" Abruptly he turned and strode toward the door. At the threshold he hesitated and turned.

"I forgot, Lois—we can't break off like this. We've got to think of your mother. You were going to let me provide for her——"

"Mother will have her treatment, never fear. I might have expected this insinuation that I was capable of marrying for money. It is the last straw!"

"Lois! Why that's the last thing I——" He choked at the hopelessness of it, then, more calmly: "But how can you help her? You haven't anything except your Texas oil stock, and you'll never sell that——"

"Pardon me, you are again mistaken. I had an offer from Chicago this morning by telegraph."

"I repeat, Lois—you can't sell it for anything like what it is going to be worth. Some day you'll come to me——"

"Lee Shoreham," she assured him thru white lips, "if I ever ask a favor of you, or so much as speak to you again, I hope—I hope—I hope I may——" The sentence was unfinished for the choking sob that accompanied it.

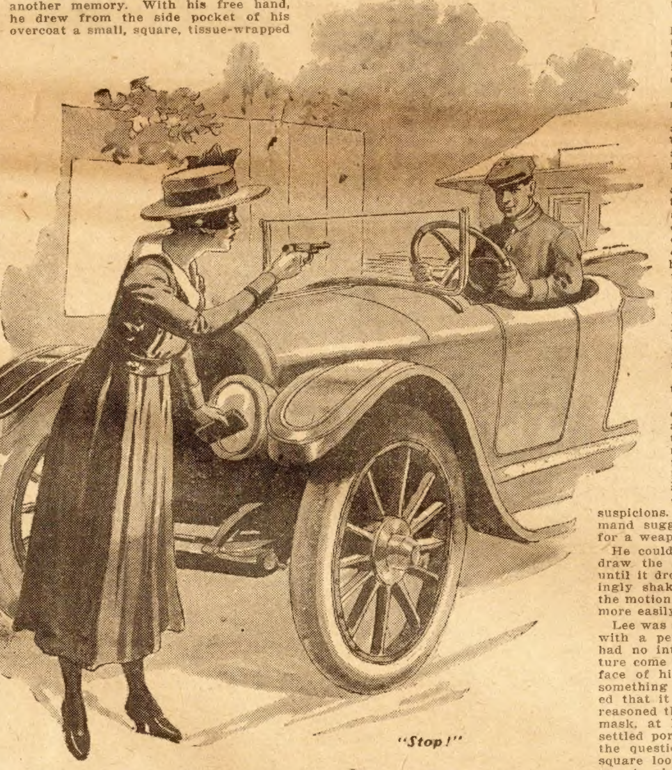
"Very well, I hope you may, too!" he echoed bitterly, as he strode blindly from the room.

"Confound Miss Lorraine, anyway," he muttered, as he turned the car homeward. "If I hadn't stopped to speak to her when I picked out the jewels this morning, I'd have——"

But this train of thought brought up another memory. With his free hand, he drew from the side pocket of his overcoat a small, square, tissue-wrapped package, which he surveyed ruefully in the light of the moon. It was another element of the shattered dream. The package contained six rather costly lavallieres, selected only that morning from the stock of the Schwalbe establishment. One was to have been his wedding present to Lois; he had taken an assortment so that she could choose. Now, everything was all off.

With which, and similar gloomy reflections, he covered the nine miles between the Stanfield cottage in the suburbs and the sightly Shoreham acres lying nine miles out from the city limits.

In the morning, he called up the jewelry firm to convey the information that he would bring the lavallieres in before closing time that day. The sooner he could get all reminders of Lois out of sight the better. But it was shortly after 3 o'clock when Lee started townward on his errand. To be exact, the interurban which passed the Shoreham estates every afternoon at 3:30 was just disappearing in the distance. A lonely feminine figure stood uncertainly by the little waiting station, evidently a passenger just alighted. Lee observed this in the moment before his cap blew off, as he swung into the main road. When he started on again, after the delay, the figure had mysteriously disappeared.



"Stop!"

He was slumping down in his seat, after crossing the tracks, preparatory to a burst of speed over the next two-mile smooth stretch, when, from behind the waiting station, a woman boldly dashed into the road ahead. Simultaneously came the command:

"Stop! Throw up your hands."

Lee had halted of his own accord—otherwise he would have run over her—but he entirely neglected to obey the second half of the command. The feminine bandit wore a smartly cut dark blue suit and a broad sailor hat. She looked altogether chic and up to date, and not in the least unconventional except for the incongruous face mask which she wore, and the small automatic firmly directed at Lee.

As she approached the side of the machine, he stifled an impulse to seize his opportunity suddenly to throw on the power and dart ahead. Curiosity forbade.

The cords of her smooth throat swelled convulsively twice, before she issued her next demand:

"Open the tonneau door."

His fingers sought the fastener; he obeyed and awaited developments.

"I am desperate," she went on huskily. "I must be at the Hudson Street Station before 5 o'clock. If you drive me there quickly, you need not fear. Otherwise ——" and she waved the automatic in a wavering circle.

Lee was beginning to enjoy life again.

"Oh," she added, a distinct choke in her voice, "if you only knew what this means!"

The anticlimax to her melodramatic command was too much. He burst into a hearty laugh.

"Stop that! Do you intend to——"

He sobered and replied promptly: "Sure thing. You needn't have bothered with that toy cannon—I'm noted for being always ready to oblige a lady."

She climbed lightly into the rear seat.

"Don't you dare turn around!" She emphasized the command by prodding his spinal column with the automatic. "And drive fast."

It was not until they had shot forward a mile or so that Lee thought of the package in the pocket of the overcoat that hung over the back of the seat. Her voice had carried such sincerity that he had not questioned her motive in stopping him; but the recollection that he was custodian of something like five thousand dollars' worth of jewels suggested caution. It would be well to get them into his inner pocket before she——

"Keep your hand away from that coat!"

Lee guiltily drew back the exploring member. And after all, since no one outside of the jeweler's establishment—not even Lois Stanfield—knew that he had the lavallieres in his possession, to show any anxiety about the coat would only arouse his passenger's suspicions. Let her think, as her command suggested, that he was reaching for a weapon.

He could, however, and did, gradually draw the overcoat over the seat back until it dropped down at his side, seemingly shaken from its resting-place by the motion of the machine. He breathed more easily.

Lee was a perfectly normal young man, with a perfectly human curiosity. He had no intention of letting the adventure come to a close without seeing the face of his passenger—especially when something intangible about her suggested that it would be worth seeing. He reasoned that she must soon remove her mask, at least when they entered the settled portion of the city, and debated the question of turning and getting a square look at her. His final decision was to play the game according to her rules till he reached the station, when he would draw up in front of the entrance and whirl suddenly in time to get a good look at her as she alighted.

Hudson street was crowded as usual. Lee waited a moment for the traffic policeman's order to go ahead, then darted forward and drew up neatly beside the curb at the main entrance of the station. Then he turned quickly, to carry out his plan. That is, he turned—but he saw no passenger.

For a moment he stared blankly at the empty seat; then a grin of appreciation came over his face. She had forestalled his plan, when he was halted by the traffic guardian, by darting down the entrance of the subway which led to the interior of the station.

To find her in the labyrinthian building, with its passages leading to waiting-rooms, trains, lavatories, the hotel elevators and lunchrooms, was an unthinkable task. No doubt by this time she was safely aboard her train. His curiosity was strong, but not sufficient to justify him in taking up the chase. A glance at his watch showed that it was fifteen minutes to 5. He would have barely time to keep his appointment at the jeweler's.

It was not until Lee drew up at his destination and reached for the package that he "woke up." Carefully he went thru every pocket of the overcoat, then searched the machine. On the floor he found a strip of black silk which he recognized as the mask—otherwise the search was ineffective.

In his cock-sureness, he had permitted himself to be neatly "stung;" but he lost no time in regrets. Rather, he was thankful that he had made the discovery before entering the store, where a crowd of inwardly amused clerks would have witnessed his chagrin. Without hesitation, he drove to the office of Eugene Byers.

Gene was not a detective; but he was a young lawyer with some reputation for keenness, and two or three exploits in which he figured had won him the title of "Old Sleuth Byers" among his former classmates.

"Just the man I was looking for," the lawyer greeted. "I haven't a thing on for tonight, and since idling is the best thing you do, I was going to call you up and suggest that we——"

"Wrong," contradicted Lee. "You've got a very important case on for tonight—and the quicker you act, the better results you'll get." Whereupon, he launched into a hasty description of the incident in which he had acted the role of victim, producing the silk band at the conclusion, in verification of his tale.

Byers critically examined the exhibit; but he did not seem overcome with grief at his friend's loss. In fact, his manner suggested a very unsympathetic, tho repressed, tendency toward mirth. "Of all sad words of tongue or pen," he mused, "the saddest are, 'He's stung again!' Lee Shoreham, famous as a heart smasher, gets his—and from a woman! I always feared, Lee, that your fatal seductiveness would get you into trouble. Wait till the papers get hold of it."

"They'd better not," threatened Lee. "I'll have you hauled up for breach of professional ethics, if a whisper of this leaks out."

"So this is the mask," commented Gene, holding it up to the light; "and these jagged gashes that look as if they had been hacked with a dull penknife are the eyeholes thru which the fair bandit delivered the burning glances that hypnotized our hero. To be frank, Lee, I wonder that you have the nerve to come to me. Honestly, now, I'll bet she asked for the trinkets and you didn't have the heart to refuse her."

"Cut it! I'm out five thousand dollars and don't feel in a mood for jollying. What's the first thing to do?"

Byers considered. "Suppose you take this across the street to the women's hosiery counter in the Toggery Shop. Try to find out from what brand of silk footwear it was torn."

"What!" Lee snatched the strip of cloth and stared at it incredulously.

"One of the peculiar features of this case," commented Gene, "is the hastily improvised silk mask. You understand, of course, that I wouldn't be worth my salt as a detective if I didn't find some feature of the case that I could label peculiar. I surmise that the manufacture of this mask from materials nearest to hand—or, I should say, nearest to—er—foot—is what took your fair highwayman behind the waiting station in the interval while you were chasing your cap. But run along, before the store closes. I'll do a little telephoning."

Ten minutes later, when Lee returned, Gene was in the act of hanging up the receiver. He turned inquiringly.

"The clerk thought the stocking was Gossimer brand. What's next?"

"H'm! Very good for an amateur." The lawyer reached for his hat. "Now, if you think you are to be trusted to drive thru the streets at an hour when the feminine population of the city is still at large, we'll——"

"Can that stuff!" repeated Lee, somewhat testily. "I'll let you kid me all you want, afterward, but let's stick to business now. Learn anything?"

Gene spoke severely. "All great detectives are noted for their reticence. Share my private information with a mere client! Shades of Sherlock Holmes—never! Drive me to the Hudson Street Station."

Arrived at their destination, Byers did not seek out the ticket window, as Lee had vaguely expected him to, but led the way at once to the hotel office overhead. There his brief and pointed inquiries disclosed that one Joseph Marsh of Chicago had occupied room 409 for a short time that day, arriving at 2:30 in the afternoon and checking out shortly after 5, for the south-going express. Yes, there had been a visitor—here Lee pricked up his ears. Just before 5 o'clock, a neatly dressed young woman in a blue suit and stylish sailor hat, who gave no name, had been shown up to his room. The elevator boy, when called into the consultation, remembered that she had departed hurriedly within ten or fifteen minutes.

Byers thanked the clerk for the information and asked permission to present him with a handful of cigars—also to speak to the floor maid. Both requests were granted with alacrity.

"I'll have to hand it to you, Gene," commented his client in the elevator. "You're really some wiz. How did you think of its being the hotel?"

"Don't annoy me with childish questions," returned Gene. "You couldn't hope to understand the subtleties of a great detective's reasoning if they were explained with a diagram. Furthermore, you ought to spend this interval getting a grip on yourself. We are about to have an interview with a member of the dangerous sex. I don't know whether she is young or old, white or black—but perhaps, as a measure of precaution—knowing your failings—you had better let me hold your watch and pocketbook."

Lee trod very hard on the detective's toes, as they left the elevator.

"Thank Heaven, she's black as Egypt!" breathed Gene, as they came upon the object of their search at one of the linen closets. Gravely he presented the maid with a dollar bill.

"Advance payment for a little information," he began seductively. "About an hour ago a young woman entered room 409 and spent a few minutes with the man who occupied it. Did you, by any chance, notice whether the door was left open?"

"Yessah, it war."

"Then perhaps you—well, perhaps you just happened to be passing by and caught a few words of the conversation that transpired within."

"Nosah, I didn'."

"Now, now! Far be it from me to accuse you of eavesdropping when the men on this floor receive lady callers; but this, of course, is a different matter. The door was left open, and——"

"Say, does you-all think I's gwine waste my time lis'nin' whar dey don' tak de trouble to shut dey doahs?"

Lee stifled a chuckle; but the lawyer's discomfiture lasted only a moment.

"Then you heard nothing at all?" he insisted.

"Nosah. On'y when de young 'ooman was leavin', I heahd him say: 'I'll 'low you three thousan' dollahs fo' dem—not a cent mo'.' An' she went away lookin' lak she gwine ter bus' out cryin'."

Gene favored his client with a triumphant glance and dragged him toward the elevator. When they had reached the lobby he rushed off at once to a telephone booth.

"All right," he announced, returning. "Now drive to 2300 Lakeside avenue."

Lee stared. "To 2300 Lakeside!"

"That's what I said. Recognize the address?"

"Of course I do. That's where Miss Lorraine lives. Why, you big chump, didn't I tell you that she was the girl Lois and I had our rumpus over?"

"You did not! You mentioned only that it was over some working girl you had befriended."

"But look here," insisted Lee. "You aren't trying to suggest that she had anything to do with the robbery?"

"Sit down," commanded Gene. "This is very annoying—a client should never have any ideas of his own on the case in hand. It isn't done. But since you won't follow the rules, I'll tell you what I've found out. I hope you'll understand that it's entirely unethical—spoils the dramatic effect and lets the common populace in on the secrets of the elect—but here goes. First, I called up Schwalbe's and obtained an accounting for all of their employes. Miss Lorraine was the only one off duty this afternoon. She returned home, pleading sick headache, but, according to her landlady, remained in her room only a few minutes. I have learned by telephone that she has just returned. The description of her costume does not tally with yours; but if she is clever enough to carry out such a daring scheme, she is clever enough to ward off suspicion by changing her dress somewhere."

"You're on the wrong trail," insisted Lee. "Miss Lorraine isn't that type of girl. She couldn't have——"

"Have it your own way—but you can't get around the evidence. No one outside of the jewelry house knew that the lavallieres were in your possession. You telephoned your intention of returning them this afternoon, and the message passed thru her exchange. She had time, after leaving her lodgings, to take a car that would get her out to your place soon enough to intercept you. It's a clear case. All we need to do is to surprise her into a confession, and demand the name and whereabouts of her accomplice."

"We'll do nothing of the sort," responded Lee.

"You mean you still doubt——"

Lee hesitated. "Oh, I can see how the evidence points. But I can tell you one thing: If she did it, she was forced into it by the cruelest sort of pressure."

"Of all the sentimental boobs!"

"Wait a minute," interrupted Lee. "I couldn't tell Lois this, last night; but you're one of the old bunch. You may storm and sneer—but you'll understand."

"I'm all ears," responded Byers, skeptically.

"Rita Lorraine—which isn't her real name—came to me about a year ago with a note from Roger Layle. You remember Layle."

"Of course. 'Preacher Layle' we called him. Last I heard he was running some sort of a New York slum mission."

"He is yet. He sent this girl to me with a letter explaining that she was struggling to keep on the level, but a scamp brother was doing his best to make it impossible. Layle wanted me to get her a start here, and to keep her identity hidden so that the brother couldn't bleed her of her earnings. I've carried out instructions, and that's all my relations with her amount to. The one thing she's afraid of is that her brother will get wind of her present location and come to blackmail her."

"There you are!" The lawyer rose to his feet. "You've supplied the motive, which makes the chain complete. Marsh wasn't an accomplice, then, but some one—maybe the brother himself—who came to extort money. She had to satisfy his demands somehow or other—hence the desperate measures she took. It's clear as day."

"Just the same, old man, I don't want to follow the case any further."

"I suppose you prefer to let the scamps continue to hound her!"

"No; but I prefer to wait a day or so before taking action. I want to see whether she comes first to me."

"It's your loss," assented Byers, resignedly. "But for your own protection, you soft-hearted, susceptible simp, let me suggest that you leave all your valuables and your pocketbook with some reliable custodian, and——"

"Forget it! That joke's growing stale," interrupted Lee, with the frankness of long familiarity. "Take you home in my machine, if you're ready."

"Thanks, no. I'm dining downtown—another important case on for this evening."

It was not until Lee had nearly reached home that he remembered Gene's earlier remark that he had an evening of leisure before him. He wondered. And he wondered still more when, next morning, the butler delivered to him a message from Byers, requesting the honor of a call as soon after 11 as possible.

Promptly at the hour, he presented himself at the lawyer's office. Gene wasted no time in greetings.

"Some detectives," he began theatrically, "are born with a sixth sense which enables them unerringly to follow the scent; others with great precision of intellect; while still others are masters of organization—and a few rely wholly on bull luck. Modesty forbids me to say to which method I owe my greatness. Recognize this?"

He held out a small package. Lee took it dazedly. No doubt about it—there was Lois Stanfield's name on the tissue wrapper, just as he had written it. Granted that the contents were intact, the missing lavallieres had been recovered.

"Where—what—where did you get this?" he stammered. Then suddenly, "You didn't take it upon yourself to force Miss Lorraine——"

"Lee, I'm ashamed of you—dragging an innocent girl's name into the affair."

"You old hypocrite! But who, then?——"

"Listen, while I explain. After I left you last evening, I did myself the honor to call on Miss Stanfield. My first object, of course, was to see whether there was any chance that she might reconsider her refusal to my proposal of last year and the year before and several years before that. If I was unsuccessful in reopening the case on an appeal, I had determined to make a disinterested effort to patch up things for you—knowing, as I did, the true facts about Miss Lorraine. Bull luck was on my side. Before I could come to the point, Miss Stanfield made a full confession that she had held up a wealthy young man on the open highway yesterday and robbed him of a small fortune in jewels."

Lee flared. "Look here, Gene, you're getting pretty close to the raw edge with your jokes! Leave Lois out of this."

"I promise not to mention her name again. But here are the details. A certain nameless young lady receives a telegram relating to some oil stock she holds. Telegram requests her to call at the Hudson Depot Hotel between trains to receive five thousand dollars, cash down, for her stock. A pressing need for a large sum of money causes this young lady to keep the appointment—that is, to try to keep it. After riding some distance, she discovers that she has taken the wrong car—the one traveling away from the station. She alights at once, but there is no return car due which will enable her to keep the appointment. Providentially, an auto approaches. But curses! Only the night before she had emphatically told the young man who is driving it that she will never speak to him again, much less ask a favor. In this dilemma—and it's some dilemma, believe me!—she has an inspiration. What she cannot bring herself to ask as a favor, she can demand a la Jesse James. Luckily, she had put her pearl-handled automatic in her bag as a precaution before going to the hotel to meet a strange man. A mask is quickly devised—and there you are. We've had gentlemen of the road; in these days of feminism why not a lady of the road?"

Lee, wide-eyed, took a sudden step forward.

"Gene! You're not trying to stuff me! The girl I drove in yesterday wasn't——"

"She speaks for herself." And Lee, turning toward the inner room door, saw a vision of tearful-eyed loveliness standing hesitatingly on the threshold.

"Lois! But you took the jewels—I don't understand——"

Not that he lost any time in saying this. The sentence ended with both the girl's hands clasped in his.

"But Lee—I—I thought you had a gun. And when you weren't looking, I reached in the pocket and took out—that! Then the coat fell over the seat, and I couldn't put it back. I saw my name—and—and I thought you were returning my letters! So I put it in my bag—and—and Lee—I was so foolish about Miss Lorraine! Mr. Byers has explained everything. Can you ever forgive me?"

"Explained?" Lee shot a withering glance at the lawyer.

"Yes—about how you asked her help in selecting my present. Tell me you'll forget the terrible things I said."

Lee drew a long breath of relief.

"I'll try," he agreed, "if it doesn't happen again. As for Gene—well, we'll have to admit that he's a bum detective, but a mighty good side partner for Cupid."

* * *

YOUR LITTLE WIFE.

Who plans to make your future bright?
    Your little wife.
Who cooks to tempt your appetite?
    Your little wife.
Who tells her women friends that you
Are one grand husband thru and thru?
Who's the best girl you ever knew?
    Your little wife.
Who pats your cheeks when you get home?
    Your little wife.
Who smooths the thin hair on your dome?
    Your little wife.
Who looks at you, her brown eyes clear,
And, snuggling to you, extra near,
Says: "This is pay-day, ain't it, dear?"
    Your little wife.

* * *

Those They Wed.

"I suppose the wedding of Miss What's-her-name, on the fourth floor, will be a very elaborate affair," remarked the woman from apartment G as she met the janitor's wife in the corridor and stopped her for the latest authentic news of the flat dwellers.

"They say it's going to be the swellest wedding ever given in these here apartments," replied the janitor's wife. "They ain't sparing no expenses on anything. Her mother said to me last week, 'We'll make the neighbors' eyes pop, all right.' Did you see the canopy that runs from the front door to the curb? That's so they won't get wet if it rains. They say it's all the style now. I told Oswald, my husband, if he's wise he'll buy one and rent it every time there's a wedding in the neighborhood."

"And what does the young man do whom she's marrying?" queried the woman from apartment G.

"He don't do nothing—his father does it. That's why her papa was kind of against the wedding till she cried so hard he had to give in. Her father is a business man, and he wanted his daughter to marry the same kind. You know how a girl is. This young man played tennis so nice she just hated to lose him. And on the beach last summer they say he looked like a life saver. That's all right, but when I think of my Oswald I say looks ain't everything that's to be considered.

"Furthermore, Mrs. Argle, I say let the young people pick their own partners. Ain't I right? If I and Oswald let our folks interfere when we wanted to marry we wouldn't be two happy souls all these years together.

"Believe me, our people tried to stick in their oar, but we wouldn't stand for it. His folks were awful. They didn't want him to marry me, and I know it. They used to say, 'Oswald, you must marry a girl what can play piano.' Huh! They didn't care whether she knew how to cook, wash, iron, mend or was handy with tools, just so's she could play the piano.

"My own family was that way, too. Already picked out for me they had a clerk in the dry goods store. They used to say to me, 'Emma, look at Henry once. A white collar always, nice clothes with a fancy vest and shaves every day. If you don't marry him you'll be sorry. That was nineteen years ago and I'm still happy—with Oswald."

"I, too, was almost persuaded from marrying the man I loved," mused the woman from apartment G. "Alfred——"

"Say," interrupted the janitor's wife, "I ain't got time now, I got to do them halls, but maybe I'll see you tomorrow morning by the laundry. I want to hear your story awful bad!"

THE KAISER'S SPY

By T. C. Harbaugh

In this startling story a certain American maker of war munitions and his heroic daughter become involved in some strange and menacing situations, imperiling life and the nation's safety.

CHAPTER I.

THE SILVER-GRAY CONE.

AT THE stroke of 10 o'clock one night, in the hallway of a palatial mansion "somewhere in America," stood a young girl of surpassing beauty. She was the only child of Benton Van Dorn, a millionaire who was the trusted friend of the American Government. He was part owner of one of the largest munition plants of the country, which day and night was turning out war material for the use of the Allies in the great struggle against the Kaiser. Her father was in the adjoining room, where he was wont to receive his friends as well as Government officials who almost daily consulted him.

There was not a very brilliant light in the hall, but this did not in any way conceal the stateliness of Thelma Van Dorn, the fame of whose beauty had crossed the sea and brought from lands afar more than one ardent wooer. She was her father's counselor as well as his care. She shared his patriotism, and had more than once taken part in the momentous councils in the sumptuous library.

If she heard the clock pulse its sonorous strokes she made no sign, but her impatience betrayed how anxious she was to turn the knob near her hand and enter the room. At last she could curb her eagerness no longer and, reaching out her hand, she pulled the door ajar.

Looking into the library, she found it brilliantly lighted. The glow revealed the costly furnishings, the luxurious carpet, the famous pictures on the walls, all from the hands of the old masters, and the bric-a-brac which at one time had adorned palaces beyond the great deep.

But Thelma Van Dorn saw more than these things which were familiar to her eyes.

Her father, a well-preserved man of 60, reclined in his chair at a table near his private desk, his head thrown back and the light falling upon his high, intelligent forehead and his pallid face.

The semblance of a smile appeared at the girl's lips and heightened her beauty.

"This is not the hour for his nap," she thought. "He wanted to be alone tonight and I was not to disturb him till he rang for his good-night kiss. But I have something to say to him, something he may or may not fancy, and I cannot sleep without saying it."

Compressing her lips, the girl tiptoed across the floor and bent over her parent. Then as a little spasm of horror overspread her face, she recoiled with a perceptible shudder.

"He never slept this way before," ran thru her brain like an electric current. "This is not natural repose, and——"

She broke her own sentence, for her glance had flown to the table upon the edge of which one of her father's hands lightly rested, and became fixed upon something that appealed to her on account of its strangeness.

The object which she had seen was a little gray cone, pyramidal in shape, not more than two inches in height. It stood on the polished surface of the mahogany table within a few inches of Van Dorn's hand, and had he been awake a slight effort might have drawn it to him.

"What is it?" exclaimed Thelma, under her breath, as in the excitement of the moment she seemed to forget her father and his singular lethargy. "It was not here when I saw him last. Why, it's tip is gone! It has been burning, for there are silvery ashes at its base! Some one has been here. Father never had use for such a thing. Surely it did not come from the factory."

She put out her hand, as her deep black eyes enlarged, and would have touched the thing on the table had not a sudden idea struck her.

"Eric ought to see this," she said. "I have no right to touch the odd thing. And father? He is sleeping thru it all. How very singular!"

The girl drew back with another solicitous look at the man in the chair.

"We have a right to be suspicious nowadays," she thought. "We are at war and there are German spies among us. There is a veritable network of espionage in this country. They have already blown up more than one munition plant, and the Government has so far been unable to unmask the guilty. Even Mr. Bryce with all his acumen is at sea."

All this while she was glancing from the silver-gray cone to her sleeping father and back again. The silence in the room was oppressive, so much so that Thelma detected a slight odor which was not unpleasant, and which she attributed to the little thing on the mahogany.

All at once she laid her hand lightly upon her parent's shoulder, but the heavy eyelids did not unclose. There was not even a tremor in them.

"What can have happened?" she gasped, her color changing to white again. "I wonder if Bran Cooli could have got into the house without father's knowledge? I know he sometimes sends for this East Indian mystic, tho I have tried to break him of the habit. The man is a fraud; his mysticism gives me the creeps. I have seen enough of the Hindoo to last me a lifetime. Father says he is loyal to the Government, but you cannot trust such men as he. Father! Father!"

She did not speak very loudly, but at other times a whisper was enough to break Van Dorn's nap.

"I must go for Eric. He is in his room and—I must know what that thing on the table means!"

She started across the room and flung open the door which led into the hall, from which a broad stairway led to the floor above. Up the soft carpeting she went with flying feet and soon stood on the landing overhead. In another moment she was at a closed door and her white knuckles were rapping on it impulsively.

Eric Gage was her father's confidential secretary, a young man, handsome, of the highest repute and loyalty. He had been an inmate of the mansion for two years, and Benton Van Dorn had more than once given utterance to the confidence imposed in him.

"Eric! Eric!" cried Thelma in her eagerness. "I must see you!"

The door opened ere the last word had died upon her lips, and the private secretary stood before her, his athletic figure fully revealed in the light, and his gaze fastened in wonderment upon the white-faced girl.

"Come!" cried Thelma, betraying in manner as much as in words the anxiety that obsessed her. "Father!—The library!—The THING on the table."

Gage seemed to hear nothing but the last words.

"The THING on the table?" he cried. "Your face is white, Thelma. You have seen something——"

"Something mystifying," was the interruption. "How it came there Heaven knows. It is in the library and —I can't waken father."

"We'll see," said Gage. "Calm yourself, dear," and he gently encircled her waist as they went down the stair together.

"It may have been Bran Cooli's doings," Thelma whispered. "I don't like that serpent——"

"Or the work of the Kaiser's spies," put in the young man. "I know they are everywhere, even at headquarters, and Bryce can't net them."

"Why don't they get some one who can?" and the girl looked imploringly into his face.

"Go in softly," she advised, a moment later, when Gage had touched the knob of the library door. "He may awake, you know, and may resent our intrusion."

The door was opened the next moment.

"He is sleeping yet," whispered the millionaire's daughter. "I must telephone for Dr. Augustus."

"Not yet," he answered. "We'll investigate. Where is the THING you saw?"

"On the table close to his hand," Thelma replied. "It is a silver-gray pyramid with the tip burned off. There! Don't you see it?"

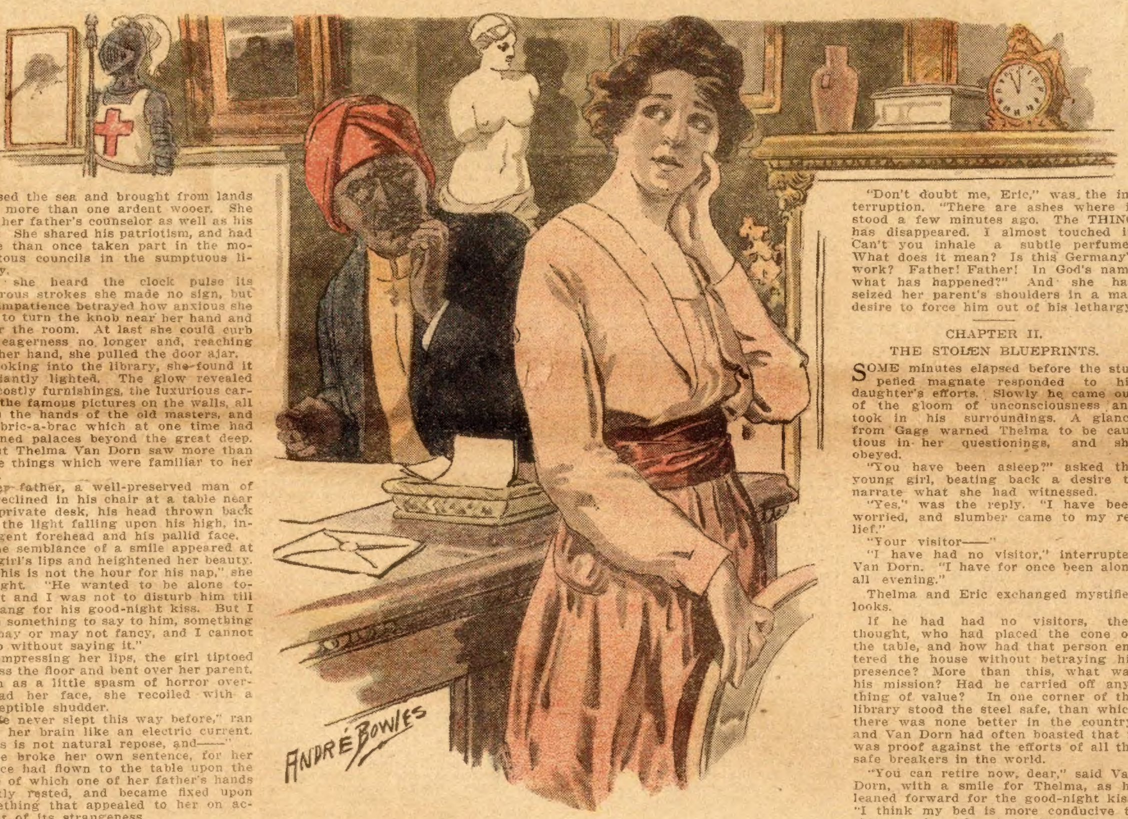
Gage by this time was beside Van Dorn's chair.

"There's no such object here," the girl heard him say. "I thought you said it was on the table."

"It is, there!" She was leaning forward breathless and with distended eyes. "Look, Eric! My God! It is gone!"

"Yes, if you saw anything——"

"Don't doubt me, Eric," was the interruption. "There are ashes where it stood a few minutes ago. The THING has disappeared. I almost touched it. Can't you inhale a subtle perfume? What does it mean? Is this Germany's work? Father! Father! In God's name what has happened?" And she had seized her parent's shoulders in a mad desire to force him out of his lethargy.



She must break the overpowering spell.

CHAPTER II.

THE STOLEN BLUEPRINTS.

SOME minutes elapsed before the stupefied magnate responded to his daughter's efforts. Slowly he came out of the gloom of unconsciousness and took in his surroundings. A glance from Gage warned Thelma to be cautious in her questionings, and she obeyed.

"You have been asleep?" asked the young girl, beating back a desire to narrate what she had witnessed.

"Yes," was the reply. "I have been worried, and slumber came to my relief."

"Your visitor——"

"I have had no visitor," interrupted Van Dorn. "I have for once been alone all evening."

Thelma and Eric exchanged mystified looks.

If he had had no visitors, they thought, who had placed the cone on the table, and how had that person entered the house without betraying his presence? More than this, what was his mission? Had he carried off anything of value? In one corner of the library stood the steel safe, than which there was none better in the country, and Van Dorn had often boasted that it was proof against the efforts of all the safe breakers in the world.

"You can retire now, dear," said Van Dorn, with a smile for Thelma, as he leaned forward for the good-night kiss. "I think my bed is more conducive to slumber than the chair. Everything is all right, Eric. You are not needed any more tonight."

Thelma touched her father's forehead with her cherry lips, and, with a meaning look at Eric, passed from the library with the secretary at her heels. In the hall she stopped, and, turning to him, placed one finger on her lips.

"When he has retired," said she, "come softly down. We will start a little investigation by ourselves. This mystery must be solved, for it contains more than we dream of."

"I will come, dear."

Half an hour later Eric Gage slipped noiselessly down the stair and met Thelma at the door of the library.

"Now for the puzzle," she whispered. "We may not be as acute as Theodoric Bryce, but we will imitate him to the best of our ability."

They entered the room on tiptoe, just as if the man who had lately left it was still a tenant, and Thelma turned on the light. She had locked the door carefully behind her.

"You plainly see the ashes left by the burning cone," she began, almost touching the particles of fleecy dust that still lay on the dark mahogany. "They prove that I was not dreaming."

Eric bent over the spot and examined the ash closely before he spoke again.

"Some one came and went," he said.

composedly. "Your father had a visitor while he slept. There is no doubt of it. But whence came his caller and when and whither did he go?"

"That is for us to find out," faintly smiled Thelma. "This is a mystery that would delight Mr. Bryce."

They moved noiselessly about the room, examining every part of it with eyes on the alert for the slightest clew.

"These German spies are the shrewdest in the world," said the girl, throwing a look at her companion.

"But we have yet to prove that your father's visitor was a Teuton agent."

"All of which is true, Eric. You know that papa's affairs might attract the spies of the Hohenzollerns. But yesterday the factory received from the Allies one of its largest commissions. Besides this, our own Government has also placed a very large order."

"Did you learn this from him?"

"You thought he kept these things to himself?" and the girl smiled again. "He was in a happy mood this evening, and imparted some of this matter to me, tho it is not his habit."

"Well," answered Eric, "he kept it from me. But never mind. The future must disclose something. Remember, I have not been in the house so long as you have. Is it possible that there are any secret entrances and exits——"

"None that I am aware of," Thelma broke in. "Papa's visitors come via the public entrances and Joab generally admits them."

"Where is Joab tonight?"

"He had leave of absence to sit up a few hours tonight with a sick friend."

"Which is a little unfortunate, to my thinking."

"Since you have mentioned the subject of secret avenues, we will sound the walls," and with this the girl began to carry out her suggestions.

It was a futile quest, for nothing rewarded their efforts, and at last Thelma came back to the table with failure in her eyes.

"The mystery deepens," said she, lifting her head. "This is a mystery for Mr. Bryce. The person who placed the cone on the table did so for a certain purpose, and he removed it while I was out of the room. Is this Bran Cooli's work?"

"The Hindoo, you mean?"

The girl inclined her head but did not speak.

"I have seen the man but once," observed Gage. "Then he was in this very room in close conversation with your father. Do you think that he is trying his arts upon him?"

"Papa is somewhat taken up with the occult, but I doubt if he has gone far enough to take much stock in Bran Cooli's strange religion."

"Tomorrow we will consult Mr. Bryce——"

"Not that soon," interrupted Thelma. "Let us keep the secret a little longer and watch."

"There may be danger in waiting if Germany has been at work in this house."

Suddenly Van Dorn's daughter sprang from the chair, and her hand closed like a vise upon Gage's arm.

"Do you know the combination of the safe?" she exclaimed, transfixing him with her gaze.

"If it has not been changed, I know it."

"Try," she went on, pointing at the safe. "It may tell us something."

Gage crossed the room and dropped upon his knees in front of the steel door. Thelma followed him and leaned forward with eagerness agleam in her dark eyes. When the strong door swung open in response to the secretary's manipulation, she uttered a little cry which she could not suppress.

"Ah! Thank Heaven!" A load seemed to have been lifted off her mind. "Move carefully," she exclaimed. "See if anything has been tampered with."

For some minutes Eric Gage investigated, his face now high colored and now a trifle pale. Suddenly he looked up into the eyes above him and exclaimed:

"Some one has been here!"

"My God!"

"There is no doubt of it. The safe has been robbed!"

Thelma put her hands over her heart to beat down the cry that struggled for expression.

"What is missing?" she hoarsely whispered, as her face almost touched the secretary's. "What has been taken?"

"The blueprints of the new factory which is almost completed."

"You are sure, Eric?"

"I placed them in this pigeonhole yesterday with my own hands. They are not here now."

"No?"

"They were not disturbed by your father, and were not to be disturbed for several days. His orders were positive."

"Then——"

She felt something at her heart and could not proceed. They looked at each other for two minutes in strained silence.

"Who would profit by the theft of the plans of the new munition plant?" she gasped.

"The Kaiser," was the reply.

"Yes, yes; it must be so. The plant at Lock Haven suffered day before yesterday and now——

"It is to be Red Bank's turn, you think? The secret Government official who was our guest last week declared that the enemy's plan is to wreck all the munition plants in the country, and he warned papa to be vigilant. I heard papa tell Mr. Webb about it all."

"Griffith Webb?" echoed Gage, with a dark scowl. "I have reasons for believing that he is pro-German——"

"Eric!"

"I won't retract a word," said Gage, resolutely. "You can't tell whom to trust nowadays. He will be one of your guests tomorrow night and I will be another!"

Thelma saw Eric's hands clinch as he swung back the heavy door.

CHAPTER III.

THELMA PAYS A VISIT.

MR. THEODORIC BRYCE was a bachelor of 40, who lived alone, save for the companionship of a wonderful Manx cat, which he called Joffre. Joffre had more than once helped Mr. Bryce solve mysterious cases, for he had a habit of curling up on the table and with his big blue eyes he led the detective to solutions which at first seemed very complex. When Joffre was in happy mood, so was his master, and when he was morose, Mr. Bryce was in the dumps.

In the middle of the forenoon following the events just recorded, a young woman alighted from a limousine in front of the Bryce domicile, and tripped lightly up the steps which led to the little front door which bore no name. Her ring was answered by a girl with brown eyes who looked the visitor over from head to foot, and seemed to form a favorable opinion of the sleuth's caller.

"Yes, miss, he's in," said the maid. "Looking over the morning papers in his room. You don't mind a pipe, I suppose?"

"Not at all," answered Thelma, as she followed the girl down a narrow and well-ordered hall to a door which was opened for her.

A big newspaper was all Thelma saw at first, and then she perceived a cloud of aromatic smoke which moved in beautiful spirals towards the ceiling.

"Miss Van Dorn!" exclaimed Mr. Bryce, in a pleasant voice, as he rose to greet her, extending a hand the clasp of which more than one rogue had felt. "I am delighted to see you. No intrusion, I assure you. Miss Sphinx passed you without credentials, I presume? That girl is worth her weight in gold," and a smile lit up Mr. Bryce's eyes.

"Miss Sphinx?" echoed Thelma.

"Yes, yes. Got her over in the country where girls are generally clear-headed and secretive." The newspaper was thrown upon the table, completely enveloping Joffre when it settled down. "I trust you left your father well?"

"Quite well, I am glad to say," and then Thelma stopped as she remembered the mission which had brought her to the house.

She had slept but little the previous night. Her head was full of the night's singular adventure; she remembered the silver-gray cone, the theft of the blueprints, and the search for a clew which, as we know, had failed.

Gage had not been consulted on her visit. Neither had she mentioned it to her father; she had taken the reins in her hands with no idea whither she was driving. She felt that it would be absolutely wrong not to consult the detective, who was also in Government employ. If the theft from the safe, if the cone was the work of the foreign enemy, had he not a right to be informed so that he could go to work at once to thwart the design of the conspirators?

"I fear you didn't sleep well last night, Miss Van Dorn," remarked Mr. Bryce, with a little jocularity which was an index to his good nature.

"When one is confronted by a deep mystery one is not expected to have a very refreshing sleep," Thelma responded.

"You have a mystery for me, then?"

"One which thus far is too deep for Eric and me."

"Very well. You will find me a good listener this rosy morning."

The ice having been broken, Thelma proceeded at once to the matter nearest her heart. She told her story in the plainest language at her command, for she had gone over every phase of the past night during her ride. Mr. Bryce, twirling his pipe in his hands, listened without any perceptible show of astonishment. He could be a sphinx at will, and this had commended him to the authorities at Washington.

When Thelma had concluded, she leaned back in her chair and studied the face before her. She had seen it more than once in her father's library, had wondered how this little man with the jovial smile could run down evil-doers with a coolness that was bewitching.

Mr. Bryce did not speak for several minutes after the narration. He stroked Joffre, who purred musically and then cast his eyes upon Thelma, as if he did not like the intrusion.

"It's a little queer," were the first words that broke the silence.

"I think it all very strange, Mr. Bryce."

"Many perplexing things are happening just now," was the quiet reply. "We are dealing with matters which daily irritate the Government. From what you have said, by way of parenthesis, I judge that you consider that Germany has a hand in the events of last night."

"I have grown suspicious from what has already happened in this country."

"Yes. You could find no secret entrance into the house?"

"None at all. Eric and I were baffled in our hunt for one."

"And you heard no one in the library before you found your father in his strange sleep."

"I heard no voices, but then my room is on the higher floor, and it is difficult to hear what passes in the library."

"I see. The man Joab?"

"He was not on guard last night, having gone to be with a sick friend."

"When did he leave the house?"

"At a quarter past 8."

"And you did not enter the library till 10?"

"The clock struck that hour as I opened the door."

Joffre got another affectionate stroke, and Mr. Bryce came back to the subject in hand.

"Who was the last visitor you know your father to have had?" he asked.

"Mr. Julius Marburg, but he comes pretty often, for papa and he are friends."

"Do you like Mr. Julius Marburg?"

It was a singular question, and it gave Thelma a little start. Her cheeks reddened.

"I must say that I do not like the man," she said, her voice a little irascible.

"Isn't he a pleasant man?"

"Pleasant at all times, but—I don't like his eyes, Mr. Bryce. Papa took him to Red Bank last week, and nothing would do but I should accompany them, at Mr. Marburg's earnest solicitation. He paid more attention to me than he did to the munition works."

"Which you might consider a compliment, Miss Van Dorn."

Thelma flushed. "I don't like such compliments, if Mr. Julius Marburg intended his attentions as such."

"Your father does not often take people to the works?"

"Very seldom. Since the plant in California was dynamited, he has almost ceased to do so."

Theodoric Bryce drummed for a moment on the edge of the table.

"When was Sahib Bran Cooli last at the house? I understand that your father sometimes is closeted with the mystic."

"I haven't seen him here lately."

"It's all very odd," commented the detective. "You trust Joab?"

"Implicitly."

"Yes. Could your father be induced to be absent from the city over night?"

"He goes to Washington tonight after our little function, by invitation from the Secretary of War."

"That is good," and another smile illumined Mr. Bryce's face. "And you and Mr. Gage have kept him in ignorance of the matter of the little cone and the robbery of the safe?"

"He knows nothing of these two mysteries."

"Another good thing," smiled Mr. Bryce. "I must commend your foresightedness. There's no use to trouble him at this time. I guess you have been on the rack long enough. One moment. How long will your father be gone?"

"For two days at least."

"Your guests tonight come by invitation?"

"I have brought the list with me," and Thelma produced it, watching Mr. Bryce with all eyes as he ran over it in silence.

"It's all right. Does Julius Marburg come at your solicitation?"

"No, father wanted to consult him before he goes to Washington."

"I see. Proper, I suppose."

The long silence that ensued worried Thelma.

"Mr. Bryce, do you think——"

"Pardon me, Miss Van Dorn; I think most when I am alone," was the irritating reply; and when Thelma found herself in the limousine her white temples wrinkled a trifle.

"What have I gained?" she asked herself. "He keeps his secrets well. I am no nearer the solution of the two mysteries than I was when I left home. But it is Germany's work; I'm sure of it. And Mr. Bryce seemed more interested in Mr. Marburg than in Bran Cooli."

CHAPTER IV.

A DARK-SKINNED INTRUDER.

THE social function given by Thelma Van Dorn was over, and her father, kissing her good-by when the last guest had departed, had taken the train for the capital, where he was to have an important conference with the Secretary of War.

Nothing had occurred to mar the pleasure of the night; Griffith Webb, whom Gage did not like, had sent his regrets at the last moment, and the two men did not meet. Webb was a young man of the world, handsome and considered wealthy, and Gage imagined that he was, in secret, a suitor for Thelma's hand. Moreover, he believed that Webb was pro-German, tho he really had no good reasons for his belief.

Julius Marburg had shone at this function with his usual grace. He was a man of 40, with keen, piercing eyes, a good figure, and, if all reports were true, a bachelor who had become a target for more than one ambitious mamma who had marriageable daughters. The fact that he was a trusted friend of Benton Van Dorn rendered him an important guest, but he did not seem to take advantage of this enviable distinction.

The next day Theodoric Bryce made his appearance at the mansion at an hour when he knew Thelma would have no callers. He was admitted by Joab, who had returned to his post of duty, and he immediately sought Thelma, who was delighted to see him.

The beautiful girl conducted him at once to the library and locked the door behind him.

"Is there anything left of the little cone?" quietly asked Mr. Bryce.

"Nothing but a few ashes which I have taken care not to have disturbed."

Mr. Bryce bent over the grayish dust on the table, and, taking a little magnifier from his pocket, examined it in silence. Thelma drew off and watched him. When he was thru, he scraped the remains of the cone into a bit of paper, which he folded and placed in his pocketbook.

"So much for that," said he, turning to the silent and anxious girl with a smile.

"Well?" ejaculated Thelma.

"I may report later on," was the reply.

He next looked at the outside of the safe, using the glass again. Then he went over the carpet, almost on his knees, and next sounded the walls with the experience of the keen-scented trailer.

Throwing himslf down in Van Dorn's chair, he asked a few questions about the doings of the previous night, asked them in a way which puzzled Thelma, for he did not seem to take much interest in her replies.

"I must be off," he said, suddenly rising. "Joffre isn't well and needs company." A minute later he was gone.

Thelma was disappointed. Mr. Bryce was a human puzzle to her. After all, he could not be the great detective he was said to be; she thought he might have told her what he had deduced from the silvery-gray ash and his inspectio[illegible] of the carpet.

As Gage was to have a little ti[illegible]e to himself during his master's absen[illegible]e, he was not in the house during Mr. B[illegible]'s visit. Thelma and the servants held the place all to themselves.

Late in the afternoon the girl came suddenly upon Joab, whom she encountered in the lower hall.

"How is your sick friend?" she asked.

"Better, Miss Thelma, thank you," was the reply.

"Where does he live?"

"Oh, across the river," was the evasive answer. "I was so glad to find him improved——"

"Of course you were," interrupted Thelma, and then, transfixing him with a penetrating glance, she went on in quite a different tone: "You know the house pretty well, don't you, Jacob?"

"Pretty well, I think."

"No secret doors or passages?"

"None that have ever come to my knowledge."

"Of course you admit all of papa's callers?"

"That is my duty, you know, Miss Thelma."

"Yes." And then, as a long breath was taken with an effort, "What do you think——"

But the girl caught herself and did not finish. She was about to invite Joab's opinion of Bran Cooli, whom he must have seen on several occasions, but second thought advised her not to do so.

She left the butler rather abruptly, and a few minutes later he heard music in the sumptuous drawing-room. Joab leaned against the wall and folded his arms.

"It's funny," he said half aloud to himself. "What was she going to ask me and why did she stop so suddenly? The girl is in a stew of some kind. I'll wager my head that at this very moment she's hanging like Mahomet's coffin between Webb and Gage. Or is it old Marburg? Gage has nothing, Webb has much, and Marburg has caught the master's eye," and with this Joab laughed to himself and went down the hall.

Thelma, after a while, went to her own rooms on the second floor, and did not again descend the stair till the night had deepened and the clock at the head of the landing was at the stroke of 11. She was halfway down when she suddenly stopped and fell against the marble banister with a little gasp.

There was a dim light in the library! After regarding its reflection for a moment, she crept to the floor below and stood there with every sense on the alert.

The entire house was still. No noise reached her ears save that which came in from the avenue, the tooting of limousine horns and other sounds which are common in every large city when one-half of it is asleep. But the light was still in the library.

The girl thought of a little automatic which reposed in the drawer of her dresser, but she made no effort to get it.

"Perhaps in lighting the house Joab may have touched the library button," passed thru her mind. "There's no need for a light in there tonight."

She moved to the door and laid her hand softly but with determination upon the knob. In another second she was opening the door quietly. It made no noise.

She had taken but one look when her heart seemed to leap into her throat and her blood ran cold thru every vein. A human figure was seated in her father's chair, a little dark figure strangely dressed for this country, a man with long hands and a head surmounted by a reddish turban. Bran Cooli! His identity did not require a second glance on Thelma's part. The man from India had no counterpart; she had seen Hindoos before, but this one was not just like his dark-skinned brethren.

Thelma might have withdrawn but for a movement suddenly executed by the Hindoo. The eyes had seen her.

"Come in, mem sahib," said Bran Cooli, in his insinuating voice. "You can keep me company till Sahib Van Dorn comes."

Thelma beat down irresolution and boldly entered. She did not stop till she stood before the mystic and was looking down into his face.

"Father is gone," said she. "He did not inform you?"

"No, mem sahib. Gone, my friend?"

"He will not return tonight," and then her nerves suddenly grew strong.

"Who let you in? Not Joab?"

The eyes answered her.

"Bran Cooli comes and goes at will," came from the dark lips of the man whom Thelma feared.

"Ah!"

"Sahib Van Dorn was to see me tonight. He may have forgotten. He is a good man, mem sahib, and——"

Strangely he stopped.

"I am mistress of this house tonight!" exclaimed the girl, who now felt a singular thrill produced, as she told herself, by the piercing orbs of the man, orbs which reminded her of the serpent's.

Something which she could scarcely resist was stealing insidiously over her. She felt that her feet were being riveted to the floor by a power which was borne of the occult. She must break the overpowering spell.

"Turn out the light, or I shall!" she managed to say, as she fought against the fascination. "You will not?"

"Yes, mem sahib," came the answer.

The long hand moved. There was a button on the table which would switch off the light, but what then? To be in the dark with this creature was terror. Her pulses ceased to vibrate. Was she going to swoon? Not so long as she was Van Dorn's daughter!

The light went out instantly. And with it came back thought and movement. There was a movement in the room; footsteps crossed the carpet, then silence.

Thelma with a cry sprang toward the table; her hand seemed to have eyes; it found a button, pressed it and the light flashed up.

The girl reeled back with a gasp. She was alone!

This strange story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger, presenting the reader with some very unusual happenings. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. You will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Didn't See Any.

A showman was making a great fuss in the front of his exhibition about the wonders he had inside. A man standing in the crowd with a little boy beside him cried out:

"I'll bet you 5 shillings you can't let me see a lion."

"Done!" said the showman, eagerly.

The man placed five shillings in the hand of a bystander and the showman did the same.

"Now walk this way," said the showman, "and I'll soon convince you. There you are," said he, triumphantly; "look in the corner at that beautiful Nubian lion."

"I don't see any," responded the other.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the showman.

"I am blind," was the grinning reply, and the blind man pocketed the money and went away.

* * *

Short of Breath.

It was the morning of St. Patrick's day, and the farmer thought he would treat his servant boy, so he gave him a very big glass of whisky. The farmer's wife thought she would treat him also, but she gave it to him in a very small glass.

He looked at it and asked: "Ma'am, how are those glasses made?"

"Oh, you know, these glasses are all blown."

"Well," said the servant, "whoever blew that one must have been very short of breath."

BELINDA'S TEMPER

"Katie is going to a barn dance tonight," said Miss Belinda, "so I must ask you to please fetch our milk from the May farm."

"The May farm, way over there!" replied her brother. "Why did you stop taking milk from Miss Sarah Ann Craig, I'd like to know?"

"I didn't stop. I was stopped."

"Have hostilities begun between you and Sally Ann after all these years of amity? I'd have backed you to get along with anybody, upon my word, even with Miss Craig. What's caused her displeasure?"

"Please don't be frivolous! You know Miss Sarah is often kind, even if she is rather set and peculiar."

"Yes, I know she's been kind to us more than once, especially in the matter of supervision. I remember that when you first engaged Katie, three years ago, she came up here and told you you mustn't hire her because all of Katie's family were shiftless. She marched home quite muffed because you said you wished to give the girl a chance and train her in better ways than perhaps she had been fortunate enough to learn at home. Moreover, there was the time when she informed you that Mrs. Swenson gave you short weight in butter."

"What a cruel memory you have, Ben," Miss Belinda laughed. "Why recall all those little——"

"Kindnesses? Just to show you, my dear, that I'm prepared for whatever you have to tell me. Well, what's the row?"

"When we first came out here this spring Miss Sarah called and remarked that she supposed the war would change Hilltop.

"'I think,' she said, 'that you'll have to be more economical now at your table, and not have so everlasting much company.'

"I replied that I had always tried to be careful about waste, and that I felt we could not curtail our list of guests very much, for many of them would have no vacations in the country if they didn't come here."

"'Well, I can't see no sense in your boarding all them city people for nothing,' said Miss Sarah. 'I guess you don't get much thanks for your trouble.'

"'Well, I suppose you'll have your flag out every day now,' she remarked as she glanced at the Stars and Stripes waving above the trees. I gently reminded her that the flag always flies at Hilltop in good weather when we are here. I was really pleased when she asked whether we intended raising more vegetables this year, because I felt that I could meet her expectations and approval by saying yes.

"'I guess you won't be wasting so much effort on flowers now,' she said. I had to acknowledge that I hadn't the fortitude to give up my flowers, but that I intended to enlarge the vegetable garden.

"'Well,' she said, 'I'm real glad of it, but I don't know what the Government would think about your spending so much time and fertilizer on your flowers.'

"I was a trifle abashed by this perhaps justified criticism. I said I should devote most of my efforts to vegetable growing.

"'Well, I'll help you,' she said, in a softened tone. 'I'm a successful farmer, and I can give you a heap of advice.'

"You see, I never have seemed to require her advice, but she has kept her eye on my garden. One day she asked me severely whether I didn't think it was time to paris green the potato vines. I told her that I had already done it. She was disappointed.

"'Have you done your currants, too?' she asked sharply, and I meekly replied that I had, and she went on her way.

"But last Thursday I found her on her knees in my cabbage patch when I went into the garden in the early morning.

"'No, there ain't any worms,' she answered as I called an anxious question. But you sot 'em so close together, they'll crowd each other out of the bed. I never seen cabbage plants so thick in all my born days. I've been thinning 'em for you. I'm pulling up every other one.'

"'So, I observe,' I exclaimed crossly, I'm afraid, Ben, but it was just too exasperating. And then I explained: 'I put them in close, because I intended to transplant half of them. I was growing them for my friend, Mrs. Derry, to have in her garden when she comes out from the city. Indeed, I'm starting nearly all her garden truck. These cabbages were too big to leave in the hotbed any longer. I wish you wouldn't try to help me quite so much. I really know what I'm doing.'

"She rose and marched away in high dudgeon. I didn't care then. I was too grieved about the destruction of the cherished cabbages, but, of course, I'm sorry now that I spoke quite so decidedly."

"Especially as it's such a long walk to the May farm," teased Ben. "What did she say when she cut off the milk supply?"

"She told Katie to tell me that since I didn't need any help, I could get my milk somewhere else; that she sold it only as an accommodation and would be glad not to be bothered about measuring it out any more. Katie delivered this message to me with emphasis; and she said she told Miss Sarah that I made her life so easy that she really needed the walk to the May farm every night for exercise."

"Hurrah for Katie!"

"The next time you come out from the city, please bring a box of that walnut cream candy, the kind Miss Sarah likes."

"Gammon! Why should I!"

"Because Miss Sarah Ann Craig is a very old friend, and very fond of that walnut candy."

"Shall I get two pounds in a fancy box tied up with ribbon?"

"Yes, dear, thank you! Now, I'll go with you to get the milk."

Old Glory

BY T.C.HARBAUGH

What is fairer than "Old Glory" with its many stripes and stars?
It was born amid the battle in the first of Freedom's wars,
It waved at Saratoga 'mid the battle's leaden rain,
Paul Jones unfurled it proudly on the ever-restless main;
Above the clouds of Yorktown it floated in the sun
To gladden all the heroes who were led by Washington;
Aye, it has waved triumphantly upon the land and sea,
We love it as we love the Christ who walked in Galilee.

It waves in all its majesty above the pines of Maine,
The gentle breezes kiss it as they sweep the Western plain,
Our Navy bears it proudly upon the distant sea,
For cycles it has been the beacon light of Liberty;
They laid it upon Lincoln's bier when long ago he died,
They placed it on the breast of Grant who sleeps at Riverside;
We hail it in its splendor, for beneath it is no slave,
And it will wave forever over every patriot's grave.

"Old Glory!" well they named it in the years forever gone,
It hails the stars and greets the sun at every rosy dawn,
The brave have fought around it when the battle tide was high,
Content for home and country 'neath its sacred folds to die;
It never waved above a crown, nor knew corroding stain,
The slave who saw it from his cell took hope always again;
We bear it to the battle, for our cause is ever right,
For God has blessed "Old Glory;" it is pleasing in His sight.

Let it float above the mountain and wave above the plain,
Let foemen fear it evermore upon the land and main;
It came to us a heritage from patriots brave and good;
It is the flag of Washington and stained with hero blood;
Oh, may it ever greet the sun until the Judgment day
When Man shall doff mortality and from earth pass away!
Old Glory! may thy deathless stars shine upon the land and sea,
And win the battle for the right till every man is free.

* * *

BOYHOOD SCENES.

"We had the most exciting experience on our motor trip," cried the bride to her friend who had been married for a good many years. "We went thru the town where Tom was born and he showed me where he went to school—and he almost found the tree where he had carved his initials—only they had cut it down!"

"Goodness!" said the long-married woman. "I hope you acted distinctly bored! That's a terrible trait to let develop!"

"I don't understand!" objected the bride indignantly. "Why, I'm terribly interested in everything about Tom's life! It was perfectly fascinating to think I stood right where he had attended grammar school!"

"Uh, huh," said her friend. "I remember just as well when Henry and I spent our first Christmas at his granduncle's, where he had lived two years as a boy. Henry and I would start out for a walk of five miles or so, and we'd progress about half of one. 'By Jove!' Henry would say as we emerged thru the gate. 'The Sanborn house is still standing and as unpainted as ever! Just look at it! See that window—no, the one by the bushes. Well, many's the day I've spent in that room. Hank Sanborn and I carved ships in there. I'm going to see whether Grandma Sanborn will let me take a look.'

"'How perfectly lovely!' I would cry.

"We would go in and then upstairs and stare at a very uninteresting room, horribly furnished, and while I stood first on one foot and then the other Henry would exclaim over the cracks in the floor and the dents in the window-sill. Being a bride, I smiled sweetly and said breathlessly that it was too wonderful for words!

"Finally I would drag him away and in the middle of the next block he would spy a pump all frozen up. 'Gee!' Henry would cry, 'look at the Fitkins' pump! Say, Cal Fitkins and I used to play marbles around that pump! Come look at it!' And Henry would drag me gasping thru a snowdrift and while I stood shivering he would gurgle over the pump and laugh and tell me how he swiped all Cal's marbles when he wasn't looking, and I would smile again and regard the pump solemnly and say: 'Did you really play here, Henry? How wonderful!'

"And then I would hobble back thru the drifts and stamp my feet to unfreeze them, and Henry would spy the Bazaar store. Grasping my arm enthusiastically he would rush me across the street and direct my attention to the roof. Now, the roof of a two-story wooden building in a small town is not precisely an inspiring object. I would look seriously at its rusty edges while the populace paused to watch our odd antics.

"'See that roof?' Henry would ask proudly. 'Well, that's the roof that Ty Ransome and I used to hide on and nobody could find us! Right on that roof! We always won the hide-and-go-seek games because we kept the secret!'

"'Really, Henry?' I would murmur in awe. When you are a bride it is a thrilling episode in your life to view the spot where your husband hid in I-spy!

"I remember distinctly regarding a cement sidewalk for five minutes because Henry said it was the first one in town and he had marked it while soft with his hand. All we could find were paw marks where some animal had run across it and that was what kept us so long, because Henry said it was awfully queer and he knew his mark was right there. I defy any one to extract any intense amusement from the surface of a cement walk. There is an appalling sameness about it that strains one's nature.

"I think it really was the cement walk which woke me from my trance, altho dawn began to break when Henry had me looking at the spot where he once had a lemonade stand as a boy on circus day and the place where he had found his dollar watch he lost. I figured out that even if Henry were a king or emperor or had saved an army or discovered a germ, these uninteresting spots would still be just as vastly uninteresting and really had nothing to do with Henry as I knew him—and so I struck.

"The next time we went anywhere I took pains to arrange that it was a spot where Henry had never been in his life and I have kept up the practice, and so we are still in love with each other. I tremble to think what would have happened had I encouraged him in seeking out reminiscent spots! I am glad to have Henry tell me about his boyhood days, but I absolutely refuse to let him show them to me, and if you are wise you will do the same!"

"I did get kind of tired looking for that tree which had been cut down," confessed the bride. "But still I must say I think you are very heartless! Anyhow, I guess next time we start out I'll make Tom drive in the opposite direction! There may be something in what you say."

* * *

Improving.

On one occasion a woman said to Whistler, the artist:

"I just came up from the country this morning along the Thames, and there was an exquisite haze in the atmosphere which reminded me so much of some of your little things. It was really a perfect series of Whistlers."

"Yes, madam," responded Whistler, gravely. "Nature is creeping up."

Jim Huff's Denseness

How He Shaped Things

By Mason Ray

THE Southern sky seemed a canopy of gray felt, as Jim Huff leisurely jogged between gray-draped oaks, hickories, maples and poplars where negro cabins on sand patches appeared at intervals and finally drew up at Cronk's Inn. This weather-stained structure boasted a sagging porch, while hogs and dogs shared the bottle and can strewn premises. In the dingy front room four lank men played cards at a battered table, while five other human razor-backs chewed the national weed and stolidly eyed the newcomer.

"Howdy, stranger!" greeted the gaunt proprietor from behind a counter.

His snaky eyes studied Huff intently. With hands in his pockets and shoulders rounded, he appeared much like a python ready to strike. Back of him were shelves containing tobacco, canned goods and shoes. The latter were gray with dust. The whole stock in trade seemed a second consideration to some other business which Huff named in his first remark.

"I want room and board for a fortnight," said Jim. "While I'm estimating timber for the Sherwood brothers," he added, explaining his business.

He was tall and dark, and looked at the hotel keeper with a squint. His chin backed throatward at his thin nose and his clothes fitted like a suit strung on a bean-pole. "Yes," he affirmed, "I'm to approximate the Sherwood tract." With that he appropriated a chair and sat sociably down by the rainbowed individuals who mutely stared and masticated.

"So you're estimating for Sherwoods, are you?" said Cronk, and his snaky eyes wandered about the circle of razor-backed men whose Adam's apples shifted up and down their scraggly throats as they aimed at a central spit-box. "Surveying and estimating?"

"That's it," said Jim confirming himself. "They calculate to lumber off that section and hired me to guess the cut." He felt talkative after his solitary ride, besides being naturally loquacious. "I'm a born estimator," said he addressing the masticating circle of lank, alert-eyed men. "Got a faculty of guessing the exact number of boards to the acre. Never varied a thousand in hitting the scale on a forty up North, and the Sherwoods know it. Now, there was that Tucker tract," he began, and bragged about himself until he became frozen by a silence that classed him with unskilful liars. Nine pairs of black, gray and brown eyes, besides the prominent blue orb of a one-eyed man, regarded him with evident unbelief.

"Mighty funny," thought Jim, "how danged uncomfortable a roomful of adverse opinion c'n make a chap feel."

In the loose-boarded kitchen he ate his supper of corn-pone, sowbelly and sweet potatoes, with only the snaky eyes of Cronk to embarrass him, while fat Mother Cronk poured his tea and dished out servings of comb honey. Hot food added to the limberness of his always pliable tongue, so after supper he rejoined the reassembled loafers. But again they silently and furtively watched him and perfected the art of expert spitting. Any one of the local assembly could squirt tobacco-juice several feet at a nail head and never miss. They were the most proficient spitters he had ever seen, altho he had worked twenty years in a Michigan lumber camp. So he watched them, fascinated at the play of their Adam's apples, until nine; then he retired to an ill-jointed room where wind shrieked about the corner and tumbled into a bed of corn husks.

"Them's the most unsociable set o' bums I ever tried to gas with," he mused, while the bed slats gridironed his length thru the thin layer of mattress. "Sat there like mourners at a wake, and glared at me like I had a bomb up m' sleeve and was dangerous. Lot o' numskulls!"

At six of a cloud-scattered morning he was up and eating a duplicate of the supper with a pitcher of molasses extra.

"Put me up a snack or two," he requested of Mother Cronk. "The company furnishes me a guide, and we'll eat in the timber. Put up some rashers and bread and a bottle o' mountain dew. Marsh water ain't wholesome."

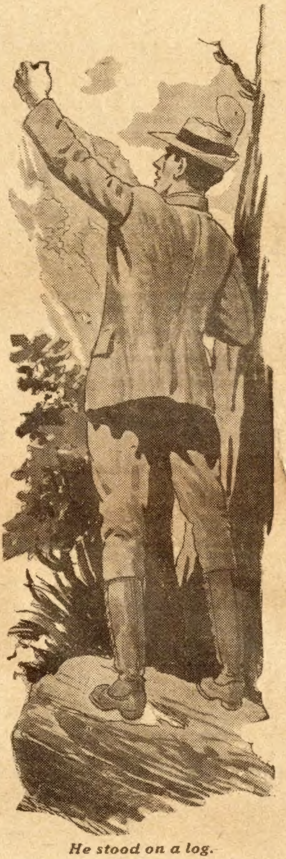
Cronk and his hired man eyed Jim so sharply that he cringed. He supposed he'd made a break in local etiquette, but for the life of him he couldn't recall the break. Presently the landlady brought him a basket of lunch, which he investigated and found wanting.

"Say," said Jim, "I want some moonshine whisky—something that'll slake thirst without insulting the stomach."

Mother Cronk, at that, stared at him with black eyes that X-rayed his very vitals.

"You-all natter to look furder," said she. "We-uns don't keep none."

Jim's sixth sense told him the woman lied. But why? Anyway, he got no drought-breaker with his lunch. Next he entered the front room to engage from among the early arrivals some man familiar with the country. To his surprise, however, every anemic loafer of the neighborhood seemed present; and every man-jack of them asked for the job of guide, but looked as if they earnestly prayed he'd pass them by. Each one appeared a bit more "hookwormy" than the last applicant, so he recklessly chose a human razor-back named Abe Gant, and the two started for the Sherwood tract. Talk of spareribs! Abe fairly rattled about inside his clothes, and he acted so tired that the sight of his weariness got on Jim's nerves.



He stood on a log.

"I don't need you no more, Abe," Jim told him about 10 o'clock, after the man had dragged one lead-weighted foot after the other over some miles of timbered swamp. "You-all c'n go back," said he, using the local lingo.

"Not by a damsight I don't!" was Abe's astonishing retort. He bared his tobacco-stained teeth like a mad dog, tho his intention was to grin. His unexpected refusal to rest himself affected Jim precisely as if a corpse had sat up at its wake and sworn.

"Caesar's ghost!" said he. "If you're so sot on follering me over this fly-bitten swale, come on. I ain't hendering." So on Jim went, pacing and squinting and eying timber, while Abe tagged behind, half asleep and chewing. By and by the surveyor took pity on him and halted for dinner.

"Might's well eat as tote the chuck," said he. "You look all in, as they say up North, and you might's well put your grub in, too." He spread out the contents of the basket Abe had carried, then invited the guide to pitch in. "If Mis' Cronk had loosed up on some red-eye I might take holt myself," he told Abe. "But I'll be doggone 'f I c'n go pork and pone in this brimstone climate."

He seated himself on the humped-up root of a tree and fanned his parboiled countenance with a light Panama hat. Meanwhile Abe devoured pork sandwiches as if his entire anatomy was hollow; but his ink-black eyes watched Huff like a rattlesnake getting ready to strike.

"Let up!" snapped Jim. "Where I come from they teach manners, an' gawping down a feller's throat ain't one o' them. I know I ain't no beaut," said he, "but neither I ain't booked for no museum or escaped from a zoo; so quit!"

At the last word, spptt! came a bullet and bedded itself precisely above the surveyor's head in the moss-bearded oak, while the sharp report of a gun smote on his ears.

"By jing!" exclaimed the amazed timber expert, as he involuntarily ducked; "that chap's a danged poor shot—and careless. What's he hunting?"

"Moccasins," said Abe, and bared his teeth.

"We better holler at him and explain what we are," rasped Jim. "He needs posting."

At that another bullet pierced the top of Jim's hat, which he had placed on his head. It was an expensive head-covering, and Jim swore. Then he stood on a log and yelled at the invisible hunter to stop shooting. Megaphoned thru curved hands at him all the names he'd learned in camps, and added improvised touches of his own.

"Guess he won't mistake me for a wild animal after that," observed Jim, and, having discovered an appetite, ate his share of the dinner.

After a peaceful pipe, the surveyor and his shadow tramped toward the center of the extensive Sherwood land among moss-festooned oaks, hickories, maples and evergreens. Spongy earth at times sank beneath their feet, and giant ferns obstructed their way, until the timber expert hoped Abe would become discouraged. The guide's languidness gave him the sensation of dragging a ball and chain. Yet several times Abe sought to double on their tracks or divert the course. This poor woodscraft exasperated the Michigan lumberjack to the verge of violence. Moreover, being shadowed by a dumb rack of bones grew intolerable. Then, as they entered a grassy glade near the center of the tract, there came a third report of the hunter's gun. Jim felt a sting at his shoulder and dropped to the ground. Immediately Abe Gant and Abe's double in looks stood above him, where he lay prostrate for safety, and fingered the contents of his pockets.

"Quit that!" objected Jim. "You d—n bone bags, put that stuff back! I ain't exactly dead—with no thanks to you, Joe Skinner," said he, recognizing one of the loafers from Cronk's. "If I couldn't shoot straighter 'en you, you fool, I'd go home and practice."

Jim rambled on, still flat on the earth, giving vent to his outraged feelings until his spinning head ceased to revolve. His gaze cleared, and he noticed that Abe and his mate were curiously examining a card. It was one of the Sherwood Company's pasteboards, which John Sherwood had instructed him to hand to Cronk, and which he had forgotten. Across the exact middle was printed the firm's name and John had written a bit of unintelligible scrawl at the bottom. Jim didn't think much of calling cards; besides, the penciled hieroglyphics mussed it up, and he was by nature, neat. He had studied the offending writing without being able to make head or tail of it; so he left the untidy thing in his pocket among his plug tobacco, jackknife, some nails intended to replace buttons and a strip of leather.

"Why in 'ell didn't you-all show us this caird?" said Abe, who suddenly burst from his shell like a spring chicken. "We-uns didn't understand. Why, stranger, Joe's been pottin' at ye all morning. He might 'a' killed ye. You-all should've handed over this here caird."

"Wouldn't that gall an angel?" snorted Jim. "It's worse 'en gilt-edged aristocracy!"

He remained on his back staring skyward, while he considered this astounding insistence about presenting a card. A city swell might cut one dead for social blunders, but Joe had tried to shoot him dead. It made him mad.

"Next time I come," said Jim, with sarcasm, "I'll wear my name front and back like a sandwich man; and the boards'll be steel-lined!"

Indignation lent him strength. He hopped to his feet, gripped his wounded shoulder and hot-footed it with Abe and Joe at his heels until he reached Cronk's Inn. And there Mrs. Cronk, with the expertness of one much experienced, bound up his flesh wound while, from the window, he could see Joe Skinner amuse the assembled natives with fancy shooting.

It was astounding gun-work. It made him forget the smart of his shoulder. The man who had pinked him in the swamp did everything with his gun except ride thru the air on his own bullets. He hit flipped coins and smashed distant bottles as if they were struck by a brick. He flattened a sphere of lead on the head of a spike and clipped off the bowl of Abe's pipe while the stem was gripped between the owner's yellow teeth. The more he witnessed Joe's expertness the angrier Jim became. He had been the butt of ill-timed jokes. Those hookwormy bums had been making sport of him! Joe had shot his hat-crown to show off. When he tried it again a twig must have interfered with the aim, and the bullet raked his shoulder.

"Fetch m' horse," he told Cronk. "I'm going where I ain't obliged to carry a card case. An' for all o' me, the company's timber c'n go to blazes."

At this announcement the crowd of backwoods Southerners eyed him like hawks, and, when he was finally mounted, Abe and Joe insisted on escorting him to the station. They seemed puzzled about something and came trotting thoughtfully on slat-ribbed nags whose heads were pendent. As Jim couldn't prevent them from acting as his bodyguard, he calmly jogged ahead with no Lot's wife business until he reached the village livery and returned the hired horse. After that he had barely time to buy his ticket and board the train. The wheels were about to move as he climbed to the rear platform of the last coach. He then gripped the hand-rail while he looked about for Abe and Joe. He wondered if he had shaken them at the livery, or whether they tarried to see him depart. Instantly his doubts were removed—likewise his hat! Ping! A rifle ball zipped thru the high crown, and his costly Panama sailed from his excited head to the cindered track. It was maddening. If the locomotive had not by this time accumulated speed, he'd have jumped off to give the marksman a vitriolic tongue-lashing. As it was he waited until they stopped at the next station; then he borrowed a hand-car and returned to the starting point. In the murk of twilight he spied his damaged hat and donned it before seeking an officer. He intended to cure that sharp-shooter of joking. Injury had been added to insult, and he planned to enter complaint before proper authority. Back to the livery he squinted his way, and there asked the whereabouts of law-enforcing officials.

"Nearest is at the hotel," he was told. And there he chanced to find a lately arrived United States marshal, who listened, amazed, to the story of his wrongs. As he unfolded his lament the marshal's moon-round visage began to glow like a candle-lighted pumpkin, and his keen eyes snapped.

"The dum fool spoiled m' Panama!" accused Jim, exhibiting it. "And it cost like sixty. A chap up North told me it was the only sort fit for this climate, and he wanted to sell it. So I paid him five dollars for it and it's busted like that. A shoulder scratch is different. It'll mend itself. But," he grieved, "that hat's a goner."

"So," commented the now alert marshal, "they're in the Sherwood swamp, eh? Thought all the time 'twas the bar ridge. Never once suspected the flat!"

"If you want me to stop over and point out them jokers——" began Jim,

"I don't," emphasized the officer. "Catch your train. And here's a patch for your hat."

He shoved a bill at Jim that bulged his eyeballs. Its munificence appeased the timber expert for all his annoyance. So thoroly it closed the bullet holes in his hat that he failed to look thru them and see a much larger possible reward.

Cheerfully he worked the hand-car to the station where trains frequently departed; and two days later he arrived in Saginaw. His first care was to visit the Sherwood lumber office to report concerning their Southern timber. He had barely crossed the threshold and seated himself, when Walt Buckley, the clerk, tossed him a newspaper.

"There's a piece you'll want to read," said he. "Happened right where you estimated our timber."

"Estimated's the word," agreed Jim. "If I'd stayed to survey careful," said he, "I'd 'a' been punctured worse 'en a old auto tire."

"'Tain't 'bout timber," explained the clerk. "It's about rounding up a bunch of moonshiners. They had a distillery right in the middle of that tract."

"Good land!" cried Jim.

"With an underground piping system," continued the clerk. "Made booze in the swamp, and actually piped it miles into Sam Cronk's cellar!"

Jim gasped. "What?" he shouted. "Miles o' red-eye and I never got a drop! Well, I'll be jiggered!"

"The paper says," resumed Walt, 'that a timber calculator tipped off the outfit to a revenue man." He eyed Jim sharply. "If that's so," said he, "the timber man must be you."

"I didn't," denied Jim, with mouth watering. "I never mentioned a whisky still. What was biting me was m' hat."

* * *

Revenge.

Budding Authoress—"I got even with that horrid old editor last night."

Friend—"How, dear?"

Budding Authoress—"He always rejects my manuscript, you know, so last night I declined his son with thanks."

The Detective Trio
ON SHIRLEY ROAD

By Donald Kennicott

The remarkable story of the burglar who could only see in the dark, and of the sore-throat-tablet bomb and the very exciting end of its maker.

"NOW, why," demanded Police Lieutenant Mackinson, "should they only break into drug stores? And why should they take nothing but chlorate-of-potash tablets?"

Municipal Chemist Reynell chuckled as he daintily covered a beaker of pink liquid with a watch-glass. "Puzzle!" he chortled. "Find a bold, bad burglar with a bold, bad sore throat."

Mackinson grunted. "This ain't no joke," he observed wrathfully. "They've swiped enough of the stuff for a million sore throats. And I've been gettin' hell from the chief on account of it. He says any chuckleheaded flatty on the force ought to've done better'n I've done."

Reynell pulled a chair over opposite that of his visitor, and sat down. "Now let's get at the straight of this," he said. "You say they've broken into six drug stores in the last two weeks!"

"Six drug stores," confirmed Mackinson. "Here's the list: They got in in different ways—once thru a transom, three times by forcin' a back window and twice with keys. And every time they made a clean getaway, tho in three or four of the places there was a night clerk asleep in a back room or somewheres near. But the stuff they took is the funny thing."

Mackinson paused, shuffled the six reports and read: "'Two boxes candy; one carton chlorate-of-potash tablets, in small bottles;' 'One box cigars, eight packages cigarettes, two cartons of chlorate-of-potash tablets;' 'One hairbrush, one shaving mirror, one half-carton of chlorate-of-potash tablets;' 'Three boxes of candy, one carton soda-mint tablets'—made a mistake that time, maybe—'and one carton chlorate-of-potash tablets.' The other two run about the same."

"That is queer," admitted Reynell, "devilish queer. H'm!" He leaned back in his chair and fixed an unseeing eye upon Tobias, the huge yellow laboratory cat—at that moment engaged in thrusting a futile paw thru the wires of a cage wherein were cabined six or eight guinea-pigs destined for poison-test cases. Then, suddenly, Reynell brought the forelegs of his chair to the floor with a thump. "Ha!" he exclaimed, "I've got a hunch! Mac, have there been any bomb explosions or Black Hand threats or any of that kind of thing around town lately?"

Mackinson regarded the scientist skeptically. "Why, no," he answered, "not exactly. And I've got the lid on the sale of explosives down pretty tight in this town now."

"Explosives," repeated Reynell. "That's just it. You can make an explosive with a mighty hefty kick in it out of chlorate-of-potash and sugar. And you say you've made it hard to get ordinary bomb filling in this town?"

Mackinson was still dubious. "You ain't goin' batty in the bean, are you, Rennie?" he inquired courteously. "You couldn't make a real bomb out of just these here sore-throat tablets and sugar, could you?"

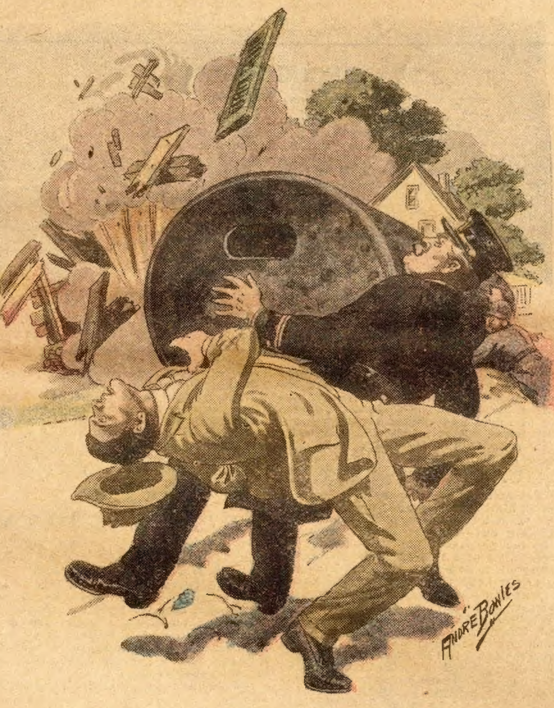
"You certainly could," asseverated Reynell. "Of course, you'd need to have a detonator and so forth. Now what did you mean by 'Not exactly,' when I asked if there'd been any Black Hand stuff in town lately?"

"There's an old fellow out on Shirley road that's been gettin' letters demandin' money and threatenin' to blow him up if he don't come across," replied Mackinson, "but he isn't a wop, and there's no real Black Hand stuff about it. I never thought of connectin' it with this drug-store business. Matter of fact, I haven't paid much attention to it—doped it out as just a bluff, tho I've had the house watched and so on. I'll bring over the letters in the mornin', and we'll see if we can see anything new in 'em from this angle—tho it don't sound very likely to me."

"Of course, it's just a guess," deprecated Reynell. "Hasn't there been any clew left in the stores they've broken into?"

"Devil a thing. I've fixed up a plan, tho. Have got Chater & Ewell, that dope shop on Clinton street, to fix up a big window-display of these here chlorate-of-potash tablets—with a sign sayin' they've got a big excess stock and will sell cheap. And I've got two plain-clothes bulls watchin' the store every night. And now," he added, repeating the little joke with which he customarily took leave of Reynell, "I reckon this bull will get out of the china shop." He picked his way gingerly past Reynell's glassware-laden tables, then paused at the door. "I'll fetch around them there letters in the mornin'," he added. "'Night."

But Mackinson had more than letters to bring to Reynell next day; for, as Reynell's morning paper informed him, a bomb was exploded about midnight at the house of the old geezer out on Shirley road. It was a comparatively mild bomb, it is true; but it blew in the front doors and wrecked the porch, and the fire department had to be called in to put out the lively little blaze that followed.



Man and cottage disappeared.

It was after noon before Mackinson put in his appearance at Reynell's laboratory, and found him eating a chemist's luncheon of a pork chop broiled with scientific precision over a Bunsen burner, and drinking tea from a bubble-thin glass beaker. Reynell hospitably filled another beaker and handed it to Mackinson—who regarded it with deep suspicion, sipped from it charily and then, setting it down, reached in his pocket.

"Well," he began, spreading out three sheets of paper on the table before Reynell, "your guess holds good so far. I suppose you've heard about that bomb business?"

Reynell nodded and leaned forward to look at what seemed to be three short letters, written in a disguised backhand on the paper of a downtown hotel.

"The first one came a week ago," informed Mackinson. "The second came three days ago—and this one here only came this morning, after the blow-up—tho it must have been mailed last night."

Reynell read:

"John Bondham, 6243 Shirley Road.

"My Dear Sir: You have more money than you know what to do with. And you don't do anything with it. I have none and am in desperate need of it. If you don't want to have yourself and wife blown to pieces, send ten thousand dollars to the writer. Place it, in gold or bills, in a starch-box I have left for the purpose, under the west end of the rustic bridge across the creek in Fairview Park. If it is not there by Thursday night, something serious will happen to you."

This letter was unsigned and undated. The second read:

"My Dear Mr. Bondham: You have failed to come across with that money, but I'm going to give you one more chance. If you value your life, have that ten thousand dollars under the bridge in Fairview Park by Sunday night. Otherwise—Death!

"Don't show this letter to the police, or you will be terribly punished."

The third was even more brief:

"Mr. John Bondham: What is going to happen to your house tonight is just to show that I am in earnest. It is a last warning. If that ten thousand is not under the bridge in the park by Wednesday night, you and yours will be annihilated!"

"Pleasant little epistles," commented Reynell. "The writer would seem to be a man of some education. What are these Bondham people like?"

"Nice old couple. He's a retired wholesale grocer—not really rich, but pretty well off. No children, they say, but——"

Mackinson paused. "But what?" asked Reynell.

"Well," said the police lieutenant, "of course they seemed a lot frightened, and they declare they've not the remotest idea who it is that's tryin' to hold 'em up, but—well, I've got a hunch they know, or think they do."

"H'm!" There followed a thoughtful silence. And Tobias, perceiving the preoccupation of his master, tiptoed delicately along the apparatus-littered table to a row of cream samples at the far end. Finding one of the wide-mouthed bottles unstoppered and half full, he thrust in an exploring paw, drew it out, licked it off—and seating himself contentedly beside his find, proceeded to repeat the process diligently and with satisfaction.

"Any clew about the bomb?" asked Reynell, suddenly. "Any pieces or anything?"

"Not a thing," declared the police officer. "Anyhow, there wasn't after we got there. It happened, you know, about midnight. The man I had watching the place was asleep at the switch, I guess. Anyhow, he swears he didn't see a thing. The first thing the Bondhams did was to call the fire department, and after the fire laddies got thru flooding the place, there was no use looking for anything. It's a ding-blasted puzzle, all right."

For a week the affair continued to be a "ding-blasted puzzle." Then a seventh drug store was robbed of its chlorate-of-potash-tablet stock. Two days later, Reynell read in his morning paper a brief late bulletin to the effect that Chater & Ewell, the druggists at whose store Mackinson had arranged his "plant," had been broken into and the thief captured. And when Reynell arrived at the municipal laboratory, that morning, he found a strange group seated waiting for him in the little anteroom; Mackinson, a plain-clothes man named Williams, and—a pale, oddly clad young man who sat with his eyes screwed tight shut.

"We've got him," announced Mackinson, triumphantly, "but I'm blessed if I know what to make of him."

"Got who?" demanded Reynell, both ungraciously and ungrammatically, casting a baleful eye upon some three dozen milk samples awaiting the routine of his labors.

"The drug-store bug," explained Mackinson. "That plant o' mine worked all right. This guy here crawled in the back window we left open at Chater & Ewell's. When Williams here took notice that he'd come, he'd already packed up a lot of that there potash stuff ready to cart off—done it in the dark as neat as you please. Williams switched on the light and threw down his gun on him—and he just stood there in the middle o' the floor and covered up his eyes and whimpered like he was bein' hurt. I can't make nothin' out of him. He won't talk."

Reynell looked at the strange young man more carefully. He was a handsome youth—olive-skinned, with fine and regular features, and even in his seated pose showing a lithe grace of limb like that of a leopard.

"He acts like a owl," explained Mackinson, "stumbles around, and'll only open his eyes when it's dark. That's why I brought him up here—thought a scientific sharp like you'd know what was the matter with him. He doesn't seem to know much of any English, and I can't make out his lingo."

Reynell stepped to the windows and pulled down the shades. The youth opened his eyes, and in the dim light they seemed to Reynell unusually large and luminous. "H'm," said Reynell "this is getting queerer and queerer. Suppose we take him to Dr. Fordwell. He's a good eye man and can——"

"That can wait," interrupted Mackinson. "Look here."

He laid before Reynell a pocketknife, a pair of dark smoked glasses, a few coins and a sheet of folded note-paper, remarking: "This is all we found on him. Can you read the note? I can—tho I don't know the language."

Reynell unfolded the note. It was written on the same hotel stationery as the threatening letters to the old man before whose house the bomb had been exploded. On it was scrawled, in careless French:

"Meet me tomorrow—9 o'clock, at Fadden's. EDOUARD.

"Same paper, you see," commented Mackinson. "And same handwriting, I think, tho the other letters were disguised. I guess you're right in connectin' the two jobs. Can you read the writing?"

Reynell supplied a translation of the words. And on hearing them, Mackinson bounced to his feet. "Now," he exulted, "I've got something to go on. I'll take this gink to Fadden's, and see if the barkeep can tell me about him and who his pal is."

"Just a minute," interrupted Reynell. And turning to the strange man, he addressed him in mispronounced but fairly intelligible French.

The youth smiled gratefully and replied with eagerness. And for the next ten minutes Mackinson had to fidget impatiently while his prisoner and Reynell carried on a rapid exchange. At the end of that time Reynell turned to the lieutenant of police.

"He's told me a darned funny yarn," said Reynell, "but I believe it's straight. He seems as naive as a child. He says he's from Haute Garonne—that's a province on the French side of the Pyrenees. Says that when he was just a baby his mother was made insane by a blow on the head that she got at an inn during some fracas or other between Basque smugglers and frontier guards. Says she hid with him in a big cave in the mountains and wouldn't come out. The people in the neighborhood—those peasants are superstitious as the devil, you know—were afraid to touch her or go in after her, but brought food to the opening of the cave—and that she lived like that for years. He says that finally—he thinks he must have been about 5 years old at the time—she disappeared. He supposes she must have died in some remote passage of the cave. He lived on there for some time—almost like a wild animal—afraid to come out because the light hurt his eyes. Finally he got to coming out in the night, but his eyes seem to have been permanently affected, so that he really is something like an owl—can see well in a dim light, but can't endure daylight.

"He seems to have passed a queer boyhood, roaming about at night like a wild thing and sleeping daytimes in that cave. The peasants were afraid of him, but were superstitious about him and didn't harm him. At last a priest got hold of him and civilized him after a fashion—taught him to read and write and so forth.

"About a year ago a queer plague broke out among the cattle in Haute Garonne; and the peasants got a hunch that he'd bewitched the beasts and took after him with pitchforks. He escaped, but was horribly frightened, and kept traveling to get as far away from there as he could. He says he kept going three nights and then came to the sea—somewhere near Boulogne, apparently. I couldn't quite understand the next part of his story, but he seems to have been rounded up by some officials or other and taken to the city. I gather that he broke away from them, and ran and was chased among the quays, and that he hid in the hold of some ship lying at the docks. The ship steamed away the next day; he was frightened nearly to death, and kept stowed away the whole darned voyage to New Orleans, living on olives and truck from the cargo. They pulled him out when the boat was unloaded; the immigration officials got hold of him and started to shoot him back to France. He supposed he was going to be killed, and broke out of the detention quarters one night.

"Since then, he's had the devil's own time in this country—everything strange to him—until he met up with a man he calls Monsieur Edouard. This Edouard fellow seems to be a bad actor, but he's the only person in the world, except the priest, apparently, that's ever been good to him. I reckon he's doing a sort of Fagin stunt with him—teaching him to be a thief. And his queer eyes certainly make him good material. He says Edouard told him to break into the drug stores and bring him all the little flat bottles labeled like a sample he gave him. Says he did it because Edouard told him to—doesn't seem to have any notion of the right or wrong of it. And he won't tell me who Edouard is, or what he looks like, or where he can be found. It's all the wildest yarn I ever heard, but I believe it; it's too blamed queer to have been faked up."

Mackinson grunted the skeptical Mackinson grunt. "Well," he declared, "that sure is a fine gaudy yarn. But it doesn't make any difference about his pal. I'm going to beat it for Fadden's and pump the barkeep there. Bring him along, Williams. So long, Rennie. I'll let you know if I get anything more."

* * * * * * *

Late that afternoon, Tobias was seated atop the old-fashioned telephone box in Reynell's laboratory, his tail curled neatly about his paws, his eyes regarding the world and Reynell with grave disfavor. Abruptly the 'phone bell rang; and Tobias, scared nearly out of his nine lives, fled frantic, as his master methodically stoppered a regent bottle, strode to the 'phone and took down the receiver.

Mackinson's voice—an excited Mackinson's voice—came over the wire. "That you, Rennie? We've treed your bomb expert, but he's a tough customer and we've got to smoke him out. If you want to see the finish of this business, grab an auto and hurry out here—the brick cottage just beyond Sixty-fourth street and Wyndham. You'll know it by the crowd standing a long ways off from it."

Twenty minutes later, Reynell alighted from a borrowed motor-car at a street corner on the outskirts of town, and found about a hundred people standing at the corner, staring toward a small brick cottage standing alone perhaps halfway down the vacant block. A little nearer the cottage stood a group composed of Mackinson, a couple of plain clothes men and the strange French youth. Reynell left his car and approached his friend the police lieutenant.

"We've got a sweet little party out here," announced the latter. Then drawing Reynell a little to one side, he explained. "I took this bat-eyed gink to Fadden's, and the barkeep knew him all right and gave me a good descrip' of his pal—who goes by the name of Ed Trenotti. This afternoon two of my dicks located the pal's hang-out here—with nobody home. They jimmied their way in and went thru the place—found a lot of empty chlorate bottles and some other funny stuff and some letters, so I'm pretty sure he's our man, all right. From the letters I gather he's been workin' a hold-up game like this for a long time—and has made a pretty good thing of it.

"Well, the dicks was a pair of chuckleheads and came back together about three blocks to a drug store to 'phone me. And by the way, it just happened that I had Bondham, the old chap Trenotti's been tryin' to get the coin out of, in my office when they called up. And Bondham's come across with the straight dope at last. Seems this Trenotti is an adopted son of the Bondhams. They took him when he was just a little shaver, from an asylum, without knowing anything about his folks. He seems to have had bad blood in him, for in spite of anything the Bondhams could do, he's been a bad actor from the start. And now he's turned against these folks that've always been good to him.

"Well, while those fool dicks of mine were gone, this Trenotti comes back home; guess he'd piped the dicks from the outside and was waiting till they'd left to go in and get his stuff and make a getaway. I told them to hustle back to the house and stick there till our man showed up.

"Well, they goes back to the house—gets there before he has time to make his sneak, I guess. Anyhow, they marches up to the house, and when they gets near, this gink takes a shot at them from the window. The dicks try to rush the house and he drops one of them—Flint—with a busted leg, and the other one gets out of range and 'phones for help and a ambulance. Flint crawls to cover and's been sent to the Emergency. I come out—and here we are."

"Some gay little party," admitted Reynell. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm goin' to do a plenty if I can ever get at him!" growled Mackinson, savagely. "I had this bat-eyed Frenchie here brought out—thought maybe he could help me persuade this Trenotti guy to give in. And I will say this Frenchie's pretty white at bottom. He and I moseys up to the house; I carries a white handkerchief on a stick and sings out to Trenotti that I want to talk things over with him peaceable. He don't answer, and I'm just starting to holler again when Frenchie grabs me by the arm and pulls me down in the ditch. Just in time, too—there's a whole flock of bullets come over my head. Those bat eyes of Frenchie's must 've piped the gink inside the house ready to turn loose. That was sure white of the Frenchie—he'd 'a' had a good chance for a getaway with me out of the business. I think I'll try to do something for the boy, instead of sending him up for the drug-store business.

"Well, I'm thru with doin' anything peaceable. Of course, this Trenotti guy's game is to stand us off till dark, and then make a sneak. I've sent for twenty auto searchlights and a boiler, and I've got six men with long guns, planted all around the place. He ain't goin' to make no getaway on me."

"A boiler?" repeated Reynell, puzzled.

"Yep. I noticed an old boiler lyin' outside that tumbledown factory six or eight blocks back. When it gets here, about three of us'll get behind it and roll it right up to the door—he can't touch us behind that. Then we'll rush him."

* * * * * * *

Dusk was falling, and Mackinson was cursing black oaths of anxiety when at last a motor-car whirled up laden with a miscellaneous collection of acetylene headlights. These were promptly lighted and distributed in a wide circle, their white glare focused on the little brick cottage. But the besieged did not submit tamely. Four times a pop sounded from the cottage, and two of the searchlights were shattered. Now, however, a heavy dray rumbled up; and under Mackinson's vigorous direction a rusty old boiler was presently unloaded in the middle of the macadam street.

Promptly Mackinson vetoed Reynell's request for permission to accompany the storming party; and the scientist had to stand idly by with the rest of the crowd while Mackinson, flanked on either side by a plain clothes man armed with a crowbar, set out to roll the boiler down the street toward the cottage fortress.

The advance of the boiler party proved a tedious business. Night had fallen, and two more of the encircling searchlights had been shattered before the boiler and its crew approached the cottage. And the occasional ping of a bullet against the onward-lumbering shield kept the storming party crouching close behind it. At last, however, the boiler was worked almost abreast the house; then one end was swung around, and it was rolled clear to the curb before the door. And then, with appalling suddenness, came the end.

Mackinson and his aides were just emerging from behind their breastwork in their scheduled rush upon the house, when the front door was flung open, and in the glare of the acetylene lamps the figure of a man was revealed distinctly; held at arm's length in one hand, poised ready to hurl, was a black cylindrical object, like a section of three-inch pipe.

The various witnesses disagree somewhat as to the details of what happened next. Whether the man stumbled, whether he accidentally struck the bomb against the door-post, or whether a shot, which one of Mackinson's men snapped out at him, reached its mark—may not be decided with certainty. The certain things are that man and cottage disappeared in a blinding glare of light, and that a violent explosion hurled Mackinson and his men halfway across the road. When the other men ran forward, they found the three police officers unconscious but not badly hurt; a mere heap of ruins entombed the body of Edouard Trenotti.

Next week's Ledger will contain the second of this series of three short detective stories. Each story is complete in itself and is very extraordinary. The one appearing next week will be entitled, "The Master Poisoner." The author is Associate Editor of the Red Book and the Blue Book.

RECOGNITION

By M. J. Watkinson

When Love, at last, comes calling to my heart—
  And tells me there is one who waits for me,
And tells me all the weary years are past,
  And loneliness is but a memory—
Then shall I clothe my heart once more in joy;
  The wistfulness shall vanish from my eyes.
And I shall seek you all along the way;
  And Love shall make me wonderfully wise.

You will not need to tell me it is you
  My heart has longed for all the weary years,
For I shall know you by your love-lit smile
  And by your eyes all free from bitter tears.
O, I shall know you and I shall be glad
  That we, dear one, can meet and understand,
When Love, at last, comes calling to my heart,
  When we, at last, can walk with hand in hand.

* * *

AT CRACK OF DAWN.

The Hyde Park man gave signs of being resolved to talk and his friend from Woodlawn resigned himself.

"I had thought," said the Hyde Park man, "that I had done about everything once, but I seem to have been mistaken. Imogene thought up a brand-new style of expedition and I, failing to exercise firmness and common sense, was drawn into it. Also the idiocy of the idea was enticing—beforehand."

"What did she do this time?" asked his friend.

"Would the idea of having breakfast at a quarter of 4 in the morning appeal to you?" inquired the Hyde Park man. "Would the notion of an alarm clock exploding at a quarter past 3 strike you as an excellent diversion? Did you ever realize just how attached you are to your bed when it is not even chilly dawn? That wife of mine hypnotized, bamboozled or threatened four of our helpless friends into joining the party.

"She called it a crime and a shame that people should spend their lives without seeing the sun rise, when they would pay good money to watch a fireworks exhibition or a stage display. She said that none of us really could tell a bona fide sunrise from a dish of scrambled eggs and she intended to reform us. So everybody was to come to our house for coffee and toast and then we would start out and drive toward the east to the sand dunes.

She told us pityingly that this idea of having to sleep till 7 or 8 o'clock was merely a matter of habit, anyhow, and if we would go to bed at a decent hour the getting up would be entirely simple. 'I took her at her word and sought my pillow at 9 o'clock and never got a wink of sleep till midnight, because Imogene fussed around till then doing things which she had forgotten.

"When that dratted alarm rang Imogene sprang to her feet and cracked her head against the wall. 'Where am I?' she gasped.

"'You're at a party,' I told her soothingly as I switched on the light, for it was still pitch dark. 'A nice, clever, sunrise party, darling. Hear the birds! I think it is the chickens next door, but still they are birds. Whiff the glorious air! It seems strangely damp and sooty, but it must be fresh because it is so early in the morning. Gee! Am I not glad I am alive!'

"Imogene told me crossly not to be a simpleton and proceeded to get dressed. From then on it was a whirl of up and down stairs, out in the kitchen, down cellar and up, and when the four other sufferers arrived, stumbling up the steps sleepily, I fell upon their necks with sobs. They said, why, yes, it was perfectly lovely, only wasn't it dreadfully dark—and then we ran into each other carrying cups of coffee and toast and things and still yawning. We started.

"There were loud calls for the sunrise at once, as it was a remarkably misty morning. Imogene said she really couldn't understand it, but she was sure it would be better soon, and so we spun thru Jackson Park, which looked like a vapor bath, and felt our way down around the end of the lake. I never knew there was so much mist in the world. Everybody has heard of the mists of the morning and I guess the entire supply was right there.

"We put on sweaters and heavy coats and climbed under all the robes and shivered and shook. Once in a while one of the women, trying to live up to the occasion, would exclaim that it was perfectly lovely and how glad she was not to miss it, and one of the men would grunt in reply and call for an extra robe.

"A great gloom settled upon us, broken only by the crack of some jaw as one of the party yawned.

"At 6 o'clock we were in Gary, and life seemed more possible when breakfast with ham and eggs was suggested, but it developed that nobody was up as yet in Gary, and they did not have breakfast at the hotel until the scandalously late hour of 7:30. Much chastened, we traveled on to the dunes and clambered up a big one. The sun having at last emerged, we bestowed ourselves variously upon the sands and went to sleep.

"We slept for hours and hours and when at last we wakened in the afternoon we thought we were dying, but decided the strange feeling was merely due to lack of food. We sat and glared at one another, everybody thinking vigorously how much he hated all the rest. And by the time we finally did reach a town and human eats nobody was speaking to any one else, and relations still are much strained.

"Imogene says the sun did rise, even if we didn't see it and that it was a wonderful experience. It was. It will last me a long lifetime. I'll take my sun canned, painted or by proxy hereafter and sleep the night out like a Christian on my own mattress. Doggone these aesthetic parties!"

"It's easily seen that you do not love nature," reproved the man from Woodlawn."

"Well," said the man from Hyde Park, "I'm not exactly dotty about nature at 3 a. m."

* * *

Fair Settlement.

Up in Minnesota Mr. Olsen had a cow killed by a railroad train. In due season the claim agent for the railroad called.

"We understand, of course, that the deceased was a very docile and valuable animal," said the claim agent, in his most persuasive claim-agentlemanly manner, "and we sympathize with you and your family in your loss. But, Mr. Olsen, you must remember this: Your cow had no business being upon our tracks. Those tracks are our private property and when she invaded them she became a trespasser. Technically speaking, you, as her owner, became a trespasser, also. But we have no desire to carry the issue into court and possibly give you trouble. Now, then, what would you regard as a fair settlement between you and the railroad company?"

"Vall," said Mr. Olsen slowly, "Ay bane poor farmer, but Ay shall give you $2."

* * *

A High Loper.

The "tenderfoot" does not always prove an easy victim. On one occasion a stranger to the West passed with flying colors the test that was set for him.

A citizen of Kalispell, Mont., a few years ago sent an article to an English sporting paper describing the eccentricities of bucking horses. An Englishman who was fond of hard riding saw the article and came all the way to see for himself. He had a hunt for big game, and then he was ready to try the horses of the country. It was decided to give him the worst bucker, pitcher, biter and twister in the bunch. Word was passed around, and many cowboys and interested citizens gathered to the feast. The Englishman rode the animated earthquake and managed to keep his seat. Some one asked how he liked the animal.

"Oh, I like him! I always like a bit of brisk riding. He lopes a little high, but, I say—when does he begin to broncho?"

The Onyx Bludgeon

Or, At Death Grips

By George Knapp

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CHAPTER VIII.
AN ENEMY.

WITHIN the prophesied two weeks, Errold was up and about. He made an arrangement with Dr. Carberry, whereby he remained at the physician's house as a boarder instead of a patient. Under the guidance of Cornelius Goggin, whom he paid on a scale which convinced the round-faced youth that he was a millionaire, he took daily rambles around the hills, was steered to the best fishing holes on Big Piney, and, in general, comported himself as a young man who was spending the summer in the Ozarks for his health should comport himself.

He made friends rapidly among the villagers of Duke, who were first attracted by Corny's glowing description of Errold, and later captivated by the young man's pleasing personality. Gradually the distrust which the typical mountaineer always feels for the stranger wore off.

He had seen neither Aileen nor Batchelor since the day of the accident. This did not please him, but each time when he started up the road to the Rydon place, a sense of reserve held him back. Surely, if Aileen had wished to continue their acquaintance, he would have heard from her during the time he was confined to the Doctor's house. True, she had risked her life to save his, but the very fact that she had done so unhesitatingly argued that she would have done the same for any other stranger.

Accompanied by the ever-present Corny, he was returning from a brisk tramp to the summit of Hubbard's Hill when he met Aileen walking alone along one of the many woodland trails which she knew so well. They came upon each other before either was aware of it, so that they could not have avoided the meeting, even had they wished to do so. The encounter was so sudden that for the moment both were at a loss for words. Then Errold stretched out his hand.

"Miss Rydon," he said, "I may not deserve this opportunity for telling you how grateful I am for what you did for me. Nevertheless, I am thankful to get the chance, in spite of the fact that I don't seem to be able to thank you adequately."

"Please forget that incident," replied the girl. "You know you did a much bigger thing for me when you climbed down for help. Had I known how serious your injury was I should never have let you do it. I had hoped"—she paused, and there was just the faint suspicion of a blush on her cheeks—"that you might drop in on us some time, to let both father and myself thank you."

Errold laughed joyfully.

"I think I dropped in on you once rather heavily, up at the cave," he said. "I wouldn't have thought you'd care to repeat that experience."

He turned to Cornelius.

"Corny," he remarked gravely, "you've been putting in a good, union, eight-hour day for some time in my service now. Such constancy must be rewarded. You may have the rest of the day off. No—no—" as Corny began to protest—"away you go now. You've earned a holiday."

So, despite his protestations that he would rather stay, the boy was dismissed. They watched him as he disappeared around a bend.

"Now," said Errold, turning to Aileen, "it seems that we're both anxious to thank each other. As a woman, you naturally get the last word, so I'll make good this opportunity for taking the first. You may not know it, but I'm a great little thanker, even if I say it that shouldn't."

But, after all, it was Errold who had the last word, late that afternoon.

"Will I call?" he asked. "Will I? Why, Miss Rydon, you might just as well ask a starving man whether he'd like to eat. Of course I will. Would this evening be too early?"

The rough Ozark road seemed smooth as an asphalt-paved street beneath his feet as he walked back toward the village from the Rydon farm. Merriment was in his heart, and merriment sat on his countenance, which was assuming a healthy tan. He whistled a merry little tune as he passed the first of the few houses which formed the village of Duke. The world was a lovely place to him. But he was jarred rudely from his dream. A tall, well-knit figure separated itself from a group around the postoffice and stepped into his path as he approached.

"Wait a minute, young feller," the figure snapped, in the well-remembered surly tones of Daniel Craig Batchelor. "I'd like to have a word with you."

Errold surveyed Batchelor coolly from head to foot.

"You've had several, already," he answered, "but as speech is free and your bellows seem to be working well, I suppose you desire more. Go on, Mr. Batchelor; you interest me strangely."

"This ain't no joke," retorted Batchelor, truculently. "Corny Goggin just tol' me who you was a-walkin' with this aft'noon, an' I ain't goin to stand fer it, nary a minute. Understan'!"

"Now, I'll wager you mean Miss Rydon, don't you?" asked Errold, with a provoking smile. "Come now, 'fess up." He spoke to the lowering Batchelor as tho the latter were a child.

"You know durn well who I mean," answered Batchelor, stepping forward, the color mounting in his cheeks as he heard the snickers of the group behind him. "You know who I mean, an'," he turned and faced the loungers, "ennybody here kin tell you I mean what I say." The men stirred uneasily under Batchelor's stare.

"That's right, stranger," one of them spoke up. "Dan generally aims to do just about what he says."

"That's a good quality," approved Errold, winking mischievously at the speaker. "Every young man should do what he sets out to do. But," turning to Dan and staring him full in the eyes, "he shouldn't try to start something he's unable to finish."

Like a great, clumsy bumpkin Batchelor blushed and stammered under this badgering by his opponent. The red flood of his anger mounted and fled from his face in mighty flow and ebb.

"You're some talker," he blurted. "You think ye're everlastin' smart, you durned city dude, but I've got a stopper fer yer music. I've got a notion to smash you."

He had drawn nearer to Errold as he talked. The latter budged not an inch, and continued to give Batchelor that cool, amused stare which some men still remember and regret to have seen. But Batchelor's anger had overcome him so that he was past the point of sensing danger. He was about an inch taller than Errold and of heavier, tho, to all appearances, less elastic, build.

"That notion is liable to bring discomfort upon you, my friend," answered Errold.

Batchelor's answer was to spring suddenly upon Errold, swinging his right arm in a mighty sledge-hammer blow as he came. Had that blow ever landed, this story would have ended then and there. But it did not land. Instead, a surprising thing happened.

Batchelor felt his fist go out to arm's length and strike upon nothing more solid than nitrogen and oxygen. His body, however, struck that of his adversary.

Errold had ducked under the blow, and like the skilled boxer he was, had rushed into a clinch. Knowing, however, that he could not allow Batchelor to get him in his grip, he began to work his two arms in short, powerful punches against the other man's ribs. These blows were delivered from a starting point only three inches away, but they carried jolts which shook the young mountaineer's giant frame when it received them. Furthermore, they disconcerted him. He attempted, ineffectually, to strike back. He landed a powerful downward blow, but it fell harmlessly on Errold's right shoulder. Meantime, Errold's short jabs were going upward on Batchelor's body. The latter tried to break away. This was the opportunity for which Errold had waited. His left arm, having worked upward, was now near Batchelor's chin. He shoved his fist upward and the chin was forced upward and the head back.

Then Errold stepped backward six inches and swung a right-handed wallop straight to the point of the exposed chin. Batchelor went down in a heap, to all appearances dead. The onlookers, who had been staring at the contest in breathless interest, ran forward.

"Is he dead?" one of them asked, looking intently at the lifeless heap on the ground.

"Oh, no!" Errold laughed. "He will be up in five minutes, and as good as ever in ten. I only hit him hard enough to knock a little of the conceit out of him."

"Wal, I swan!" exclaimed the questioner, looking at Errold with gleaming eyes. "Ye sure kin fight, young feller. They ain't a man 'round here would've cared to tackle Dan Batchelor. But ye'd better look out. He'll git ye some other way, if ye ain't careful."

One of the other men, meanwhile, was administering to the fallen mountaineer. Batchelor refused to respond to shaking.

"I've got somethin' that'll fetch him," said the man, drawing out of his pocket a small flask full of colorless liquid. "It's some of his own, too."

He dropped a gurgling stream of the liquid down between Batchelor's parted lips, and the latter awoke with a splutter. Errold watched the man with the bottle intently. He started visibly when the administrator of the whisky spoke of the liquid as being Batchelor's own make. A lanky lounger in the crowd stepped to the self-appointed nurse and whispered a few words. The man looked suspiciously at Errold, and hastily put the flask back in his pocket.

Errold strolled away, whistling merrily to conceal his exultation, as Batchelor was rubbing his chin and getting to his feet, assisted by two of his companions.

CHAPTER IX.
TRAPPED

LET it not be imagined that during the time Errold had spent tramping over the Ozark hills under the guidance of Cornelius Goggin, he had been blind to the real purpose of his mission. During the entire period he had been constantly on the alert, without arousing the suspicion that he was other than what he claimed to be— a summer visitor who had sought to regain his health in the mountains.

So well concealed, however, were all evidences of the illegitimate manufacture of alcohol that, but for one circumstance, Errold would have abandoned the region of Duke, and would have sought his quarry further along on the Ozark trail. This circumstance, was, of course, the finding of the cask of moonshine whisky floating down the Big Piney on the day he nearly lost his life in the attempt to cross that treacherous stream.

On the day following his encounter with the redoubtable Batchelor, Errold left the Doctor's house, where he was boarding, without waiting for the usual morning visit of Corny. He wished to be alone, for he now had a second and most important clew, and he realized from the class of men whom Batchelor led that any delay on his part might very well be fatal.

He had put in his time under Corny's tutelage to good advantage, for he was now thoroly familiar with practically all the trails that traversed the broken mountain country in the neighborhood of Duke. Therefore he struck out confidently in a direction opposite to that which he really wished to take, doubling back on an old abandoned path until he reached the banks of the river.

From this point on he proceeded with extreme caution, working his way slowly and painfully thru the thick underbrush which fringed the base of the bluffs along the river, and not exposing himself unless it became absolutely necessary.

Working in this way, he came at last to the little gravel beach he had so much cause to remember. Here, too, was the little mound of stones he had built to mark the hiding-place of the cask. Five paces above this, the cask was concealed—he had purposely placed the mound away from the immediate vicinity of his find, in case any curious person might decide to investigate what that heap of stones was for.

Errold turned and walked inshore five paces. He lifted up the leafy branches of a luxuriant bush and thrust in his arm to draw out the keg. It was gone.

"Humph!" he muttered. "I am sure I put that keg here. Maybe, tho, it is inshore further."

It was only a few steps more to the bluff which rose sheer above him from the beach. Carelessly tramping thru the bushes, Errold proceeded to the bluff. Flush to the base was a leatherwood bush.

"It might be under here, but I don't think so," mumbled Errold to himself, pulling with might and main the tough, thick branches to one side. "Hello!"

This exclamation resulted from the discovery that the branches of the bush concealed a cave, the opening of which was scarcely more than large enough to admit the body of a man. Stooping and peering into the recess, Errold saw that it was dimly lighted within.

"Well," he thought, "Corny never showed me this. It must be unknown to the people around here."

Without further ado Errold crawled thru the opening. It enlarged into a tunnel-like passage inside, and was barely light enough to allow him to pick his way along. He went ahead carefully for perhaps twenty-five yards, and was surprised to come upon another bush, the toughness and thickness of whose branches caused him to know it to be bridal wreath. He parted the branches and stepped out into the noonday sunlight.

Looking up, Errold discovered that on all sides of him the walls rose almost perpendicularly, so that egress in any other way than that by which he had

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[illegible] was impossible. Then the light of recognition shone in his eyes.

"Why," he said to himself, delightedly, "this is Walker's sinkhole which Corny showed me from above. He told me that no man except an old character named Walker had ever gone down here and that his dead and starved body was seen from above. By Jove, what's this?" Errold stooped and picked up the whitened remnants of a human skull. "Ugh," he exclaimed with disgust. "Poor Walker! Had he but known of this little tunnel, he might be alive today."

The zest was gone from the exploration for Errold, and he turned and made his way out thru the tunnel. The tough bush sprang back to its original position and the sinkhole looked as impenetrable and as unscalable as ever.

Errold walked to the edge of the beach and up a wooded pathway, musing upon the queer trick which fate had played on old Walker. Suddenly he was astonished by a cry immediately behind him of, "Here he is! Tackle him, boys!" Before he could turn, Errold found himself pinioned by strong hands, and the bodies of men bore him to the earth.

Strong as he was, Errold realized at once that the odds against him were so overwhelming as to make the contest a hopeless one. Therefore he decided with the mental swiftness which had carried him to success in his calling, to submit without struggling and to husband his strength for whatever emergency was to come. He might have worn himself out by making his capture more difficult than it was, but he knew he could not evade final subjugation; the only result of his efforts would have been to leave him in a weak and exhausted condition.

In a trice his ankles were bound securely with heavy cords. His arms were fastened at the wrists and elbows behind his back. Yet, but for the initial [illegible] no word had been spoken by his assailants. Nevertheless Errold felt pretty [illegible] as to the identity of his captors.

"Good morning, Mr. Batchelor," he said as he lay face down on the ground. "So you got your gang to help you, did you? Did the badmans hurt um's little [illegible]?"

A [illegible] of rage greeted this mockery and Batchelor's voice rang out in com[illegible].

"Turn that skunk over and lemme get a kick at that there purt face o' his'n. I'll spoil his looks for him, the purty devil!"

Willing hands rolled Errold over, but the man who revived Batchelor on the evening before stepped up to his leader hastily, whispering a few sentences. Daniel's features brightened at the words, altho the grin which illuminated [illegible] was an evil one, and bade no good to the young officer helplessly in his power.

"Set that purty Willie-boy mamma's darling up agin the tree, some of you fellers," he directed. "Him an' me's gonna talk for a spell."

Obediently two of the ruffians assisted Errold none too gently to a sitting posture, allowing his back to rest against the trunk of a mighty pine.

"And so ye was gonna be so very sly and fool us poor country fellers by startin' out on the wrong road, was ye? Oh, I've had my suspicions of ye, ye innocent little pet lamb! I knowed ye wasn't prospectin' around these hills fer your health—nor ours, neither. What d'ye think of that, Mr. Revenoo Officer?"

For the life of him, Errold could not help starting at Batchelor's last words. He had presumed the man's enmity to be due to a natural evil temper coupled with jealousy—he had believed that his identity had been well concealed.

"Ah, that stung ye, didn't it, Mr. Revenoo Officer?" Batchelor sneered [illegible]. "Thought ye was gonna walk [illegible] down on us and say, 'Hands up'— Well you won't find Dan Batchelor such [illegible] prisoner as that."

By this time, however, Errold had regained his wonted composure.

"Indeed?" he queried quietly. "You don't mind my telling you how I will find you, do you? I'll find you in a nice, cool, comfortable, well-fitting suit of stripes, my friend, at a place where raw corn juice and its manufacture are properly appreciated."

"Oh, you won't be hard on us, will you?" cried Batchelor, in mock dismay. "Please, please, don't be rough with us poor fellers."

"Now's a better time to have your fun than later, Dan Batchelor," Errold replied, with ominous quiet. "Personally, I prefer the last laugh for myself."

"Wal, you'll get it," answered Batchelor, tauntingly; "I'll put you in a place where you kin have a fine time with nothin' to do but laugh."

Errold made no reply to this, and Batchelor, eager to squelch this newcomer for good and all, ordered two of the other men to carry the captive while he led the way. The little group quickly filed thru the trees in what seemed to Errold the direction from which he had just come. Finally they pushed their way thru a thick clump of cedars, and paused on the brink of a large sinkhole.

"Unwind the rope, men," ordered Batchelor, crisply, of two of the ruffians. They did as they were bid, unwinding a long, stout hemp rope and allowing it to dangle over the edge of the precipice until it reached the bottom, fifty feet below. The fourth captor made it fast to a cedar trunk at the bidding of his leader.

"I'll go down first," said Batchelor, "and you three men lower this skunk down after me. I've got a few words to tell him in private."

With these words the brawny man took the rope and went downward over the side hand over hand with a monkeylike agility. At the bottom he gave the rope a tug and shouted: "All right! Haul away." The three men at the top dragged the rope up and made one end fast about Errold's body, under the shoulders. Then they lowered the unfortunate young man down the steep side of the sinkhole, heedless as to how he was bumped and scraped over the rocky sides.

When Errold's bruised form thumped against the bottom, Batchelor seized the rope savagely, and with a couple of unnecessary jerks untied it. Despite his plight, the young man looked his captor straight in the eye until Batchelor lowered his lids.

"Batchelor," said the young man, "you are a d—d cur and a coward. I dare you to untie these bonds and let us fight it out here."

"I ain't afraid of you, noway," answered Batchelor, grimly, "but I ain't a prize fighter and don't pretend to be. Besides, I ain't goin' to let any smart revenooer come in here and spoil my business, besides tellin' lies about me to all the women-folks and hidin' behind their skirts."

"You lie!" said Errold, hotly. "I've never said anything about you to any woman. I wouldn't pollute the air with your name. If I were not tied here, hand and foot, I'd make you regret those words."

"You'll have a lot o' time to do some regrettin' yerse'f," retorted Errold's captor. He walked over to a skull which which was lying face up on a rock, and picked it up. "Here's what you'll look like after the buzzards get thru with you," he continued, grinning horribly and tapping the skull. "This is Mr. Walker, another smart revenoo officer who came out here on the trail for a vacation. He's gettin' a vacation now in hell."

"You reptile!" blazed Errold. "So that's poor Walker. You'll pay for this, Batchelor."

"That's enough o' that," answered Batchelor, pushing Errold over and kicking him. "Now I'm thru with you. Ef it'll be any comfort to you, that keg you found is down the river in our cave on the other side. An'!" here Batchelor paused and added significantly, "it's full o' moonshine, too, an' is goin' to be sold. Haul away, boys." Batchelor grasped the end of the rope and Errold saw his long, sinewy figure being carefully drawn upward out of the hole from which there seemed no escape. The young man was almost exhausted and his bruises pained him terribly, while the thongs about his wrists and ankles were cutting into his flesh.

A taunting laugh came to him from above, and then all was silent, save for the barking of a coon on a distant treetop and the twitter of forest birds.

CHAPTER X

HER FATHER'S SHAME

ERROLD LE PRINZ was no coward. Yet he could hardly be blamed for quailing before the prospect which loomed black before him. First, the slow, lingering torture of thirst and starvation, bringing in its wake madness and death—and later the buzzards. Wildly he struggled against his bonds, but the tough rawhide with which he was secured resisted all his efforts. The only result was that his bonds cut more cruelly into his bruised flesh.

The horror of sharing poor Walker's fate inspired him almost with a frenzy. The chief, back in the Chicago office, would send out another officer with the warning: "They got Walker and Le Prinz. They're desperate—you'll have to be careful."

Groaning, he gradually wriggled to an upright position and stared about him. Up above—far up above—he could see the world all ablaze in the glow of the afternoon sun. The slanting rays did not strike deep into the sink in which he found himself. The cool shadows cast an almost churchlike dimness all about.

So here was where Walker had come to his end. Poor Walker! A straight officer who had gone to his death unflinchingly. Walker—Walker—Walker—where had he heard that name outside the service? He could take an oath that he had heard the name recently, and somehow he seemed to feel that if he could only find out where, the road to escape—impossible as it seemed—would be open.

Gradually the strain of his efforts told. His great frame sank wearily back against the vertical face of the sink wall. What was the use of fighting? He felt sorry for his mother, altho he felt sure the chief back in Chicago would see that she was well taken care of. And—he winced at the thought—there was Aileen. Now that everything seemed hopeless, he acknowledged to himself that his tenderness for her was something more than friendship. He would never be able to tell her, of course; but he was glad that he had been able to realize his love for her, himself, at any rate. "Would she miss him?" he wondered. "Hardly," he had to confess. She knew him only as a stranger whom she had helped. And yet—— Into his tortured mind came thoughts of Walker—poor Walker who had been cast into the sink——

Errold gave an exultant shout, for he had solved the puzzle. Walker was the name of the man who, according to Corny Goggin, had "fallen" into Silent Sink. Of course! Had not that villain Batchelor picked up a skull in this very sink? And had not Errold seen that very skull earlier in the morning? In a flash it all came back to him—the narrow tunnel thru the cliff, the mouth of it hidden by bridal wreath. Had not the slanting shadows changed the appearance of the sink, he would have discovered this sooner.

"Poor old Walker!" he murmured slowly. "You're going to make it possible for me to get the snakes that put you out of the way. You're true to the service, even in death."

Bound as he was, it was no easy task for Errold to find the mouth of the little tunnel. The bridal wreath bushes were thickly clustered along the walls of Silent Sink, and the only way he could locate the right one was to crawl painfully and slowly over the flinty rock on his knees, scuffling each knee forward an inch or so at a time. Faster progress was out of the question, for his ankles were tightly bound.

Errold's knees were bleeding from a score or more of minor flesh wounds when he finally reached the mouth of the tunnel, and stopped for a moment to rest. An upward glance assured him that the sun was setting, for he could see the rosy tint of the after-glow spreading over some clouds high above the mouth of Silent Sink.

Parting the bush which concealed the tunnel mouth with his head, Errold struggled thru. The flesh on his knees could stand no more, so the young hero rolled over on his back and made further snail-like progress by drawing up his feet, and by pushing his body along with them. Altho the tunnel had seemed short that morning, now its length appeared to him interminable.

At last, tho, he felt his head strike the leatherwood bush at the other entrance, and, with a final, mighty lunge, he sent his tortured body thru to the gravel beach. Gasping and bleeding, he turned over and faced the river.

There, around a bend upstream, Errold was surprised to see a long, narrow canoe shooting rapidly down on the current. Was it friend or enemy? This thought flashed thru the tortured mind of the young man. As the boat came closer he discovered that it contained a single paddler, and—could it be possible?—yes, there was no doubt of it. It was a woman.

Expending his last effort, Errold shouted, "Help!"

The canoeist turned and scanned the bank. Then, seeing the prostrate form, she sent her trim craft in a long arc to the shore, and ran it head on a half-length up the beach. She hastened to the side of Errold, who found his eyes gazing weakly but gratefully into the warmly sympathetic ones of Aileen Rydon.

"Errold!" she exclaimed chokingly, as she saw the torn and bleeding wrists and knees of the young man, and noted the thongs sinking deeply into his flesh.

Her pity, her impulsive tenderness, and, above all, the use of his first name caused a thrill of joy to tingle thru Errold. Heretofore, she had addressed him only as Mr. Le Prinz, altho he had banteringly told her his preference for the Christian name. He made effort to reply, but was stopped by a motion from the girl.

"Wait!" she said, and ran back to the boat, where she drew out a long knife from a pocket in the stern. Returning, she soon cut the bonds about Errold's limbs. Then she chafed and pinched his wrists until the pleasant warmth of returning circulation began to tingle thru his veins. "I learned this in the gymnasium at college," she informed him.

"You work as skilfully as any trainer," answered Errold, admiringly. "There doesn't seem to be anything you can't do." He pointed toward the canoe. "It looks like a pretty dangerous current for a girl."

Aileen blushed at the compliment to her skill.

"Oh, I've always paddled about on the river," she explained. "Just thought I'd take a little run downstream before supper. But tell me how you got into this horrible condition."

Errold explained the situation rapidly. He did not mention any names. With the quick decision that made him noted in the revenue service, he concluded not to deceive Aileen any longer, and he confessed his identity as a revenue officer. The girl's eyes sparkled. Later they widened in horror, as Errold briefly outlined the story of how he came to be in the sinkhole and of his escape therefrom.

"You poor boy," said Aileen, shuddering. Then her eyes flashed as she bitterly excoriated his captors.

Errold then outlined his plan for capturing the band. He told how his chief tormentor had informed him of the cave where the moonshine was made, and asked if he might borrow her boat in which to cross the river and hunt for the place.

"Of course you may," answered the girl, "and I am going with you. You are in no fit condition to do this alone."

Errold protested, but was finally forced to capitulate, and the two set off down the river, Aileen paddling at the bow and Errold at the stern. Swiftly they shot downstream and around the bend. With a burst of speed which exhilarated Errold beyond measure, they shot a stretch of rapids and rounded another bend into a quiet pool on the far side of the stream.

"Look!" said Aileen.

Straining his eyes in the dark, Er-

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rold looked in the direction the girl pointed and saw, piled at the edge of the bank, a dozen small kegs. A muffled sound came to their ears, and soon they saw the light of a pine torch appear, as tho by magic, out of the middle of the bank.

"Sh-h-h!" warned Aileen, and, dipping their paddles noiselessly, the two adventurers glided into the dark shadows of an overhanging willow.

The torch bearer came down to the water's edge. The tramp of feet was heard behind him, and the two watchers saw the forms of three other men, with kegs on their shoulders, file down to the torch bearer and deposit their burdens. The light flared up, and for an instant a face was clearly outlined against the glow. It was the face of Daniel Craig Batchelor.

Then Batchelor held the torch to show the faces of the four other men. As he did so, Aileen clutched her heart and gasped, heartbrokenly.

"Pop!" was the word that came to Errold's ears.

CHAPTER XI

THE BATTLE IN THE DARK.

ERROLD'S quick grasp on Aileen's wrist was not needed to silence the girl, after the one anguished whisper which showed that she had recognized her father in one of the moonshiners. For the moment she could do nothing. As soon as he had heard the word, Errold had stepped swiftly to the prow of the canoe, steadying himself by the overhanging willows. Aileen clung to him as tho she herself stood in need of support.

"Please, Aileen!" he warned in a whisper. "Your father's life and safety depend on absolute silence. They are talking, now. Let us hear what they say."

It was Batchelor's voice, guarded but plainly audible, which floated across the black waters to their retreat.

"Say, you Rydon," he demanded coarsely, "y' ain't to be all day with that there keg, be ye?"

They could hear the scrape of gravel, as a heavy object—presumably the keg—was carefully grounded on the beach.

"You keep a civil tongue in yer head, Dan," a voice they both recognized instantly as Pop Rydon's declared. "I'm havin' 'bout enough of yer lip."

"Oh, you have, have you? Maybe you'd like to quit us now, you psalm-singin' old hypocrite!"

"Yes, I would," replied the older man, and they could catch the heightened tension in the voice. "What's more, right here is where I do quit ye, ye black-hearted young whelp!"

The depth of Batchelor's treachery was revealed in his answer.

"Go ahead, Pop. Leave us whenever you're good an' ready. Only remember that tomorrow I'll bring down the sheriff to foreclose the plaster I got on your farm."

"Oh, God! Aileen!" groaned the older man at the thought of what eviction would mean to his daughter. "Ef't weren't fer my little gal I'd see ye in hell, Dan Batchelor, afore I'd stir a foot to help ye, and ye know it," he added hoarsely.

"Yes, 'n' I'm glad ye mentioned that gal o' yourn," pursued Batchelor, mercilessly. "I'm gettin' purty tired o' bein' put off by her. 'Pears to me like ye ain't been persuadin' her that she's got to marry me, like I ordered ye. I mightn't 'a' minded to wait, if that there cussed revenooer hadn't woke me up. Well, he's where he won't bother nobody but the buzzards now."

"No, I hain't been orderin' her to marry ye," said the elder. "What's more, I don't aim to. If ye win her fair and square, all right, I won't say nary a word agin it, tho God knows I ought to. But if she won't, she won't—ye hear me? An' if that don't suit ye, Mr. Daniel Craig Batchelor, foreclose that plaster and be d—d to ye!"

They could see the flicker the torch made as Batchelor swung it upward, evidently for the purpose of gazing around.

"Quiet, you old fool!" he hissed. "[illegible] to tell [illegible] Pop [illegible] the cave [illegible] down [illegible] [illegible]"

[illegible] Pop Rydon [illegible] led the way, and the rest [illegible] the mouth of the [illegible] Errold [illegible] Aileen [illegible] the two [illegible] up the bank and [illegible] into the cave just as the [illegible] pine torch were [illegible] the subterranean [illegible] stumbling and groping. [illegible] stumbled forward. The roof was [illegible] low to permit them to walk upright. Suddenly they crawled out from beneath [illegible] of rock, and feeling upward [illegible] they could not touch the roof. Ahead of them they saw faint rays of light. Stepping toward it and turning toward the right, they were able to distinguish thirty yards ahead of them the shadowy outlines of the group of moonshiners who were rapidly walking downward along the passageway, which was straight as a railroad tunnel between the two parties.

"Why," exclaimed Aileen, with an air of surprised recognition. "I've been here before! This is an old cave I used to explore when I was a little girl."

Errold could see in the dimming light that the floor of the cave went downward at an angle of perhaps thirty degrees, while the roof continued above them on the level. Minute projections coming downward from the roof he instinctively knew to be stalactites.

"Come," he said. "We have no time to lose."

"Follow me," said Aileen, taking Errold's hand and giving it a little squeeze which sent a tremor of delight thru his frame.

She walked rapidly down the declivity, and Errold followed, wondering at her fearlessness. To him it seemed as tho they might stumble into an abyss at any moment.

The group ahead had disappeared, throwing the cave into utter blackness. Aileen threaded her way on the soft springy floor thru the passage and around a corner. With a hiss of caution, she stepped quickly back and warned her companion to maintain silence. Errold did as he was bidden, for, not more than twenty feet ahead of them, the group of men had halted in a large chamber, fluted about the sides by great white stalactites, and arched at the opposite end by a large and a small sill of purest onyx, the intersection between the two sills being supported by convex white pillars reaching from ground to ceiling.

Errold breathed in sharply, so awed was he by the weird beauty of it all.

"We called this the Devil's Dance hall," Aileen whispered to him, under cover of the noise of bats squeaking from the surrounding walls.

"You [illegible]," [illegible] Errold, squeezing her hand.

Batchelor was addressing the men.

"Now before we go to the still," he said menacingly "every man Jack of you is going to take an oath to keep what we did today a secret. You, Rydon, don't know nothing about it and don't need to know. You can go ahead."

LINCOLN

Not on the eagle golden
  Will we behold his face,
Nor yet on gleaming silver
  The honored features trace;
But to the common copper,
  The lowly coin, instead,
Has fallen the distinction
  Of bearing Lincoln's head.

The millionaire may seldom
  Those noble outlines grasp,
But childhood's chubby fingers
  The image oft will clasp;
The poor man will esteem it,
  And mothers hold it dear—
The plain and common people
  He loved when he was here.

Pop took one of the torches and walked slowly away, disappearing under the larger archway. Their stubble-bearded faces shining evilly in the glare of the torch, the other men raised their hands and solemnly swore never to mention nor to hint at what they had done to the young revenue officer. Errold listened to their vow with a grim smile, Aileen with horror.

Having accomplished his wish, Batchelor led the men thru the archway and around another bend in the cave. Aileen and Errold slowly followed.

The ground ascended as sharply as it had descended a moment before. Up and up they climbed, over an apparently endless slope of some slippery clayey substance. They could feel soft bodies whisking by them and stirring the air with their silent wings. Always, thru the pitchy blackness there was the sharp chittering of the bats.

Aileen's clasp on Errold's hand tightened.

"Stop!" she wailed, in a barely audible whisper. "There's a bottomless hole at the foot of this next slope, and it has to be skirted along a ledge of rock that's all slippery with water. You can drop a pebble down there and never hear it [illegible]"

[illegible]

[illegible] Aileen [illegible] [illegible] the depth of [illegible] [illegible] dismissed the [illegible] [illegible] before it [illegible]

[illegible] Aileen [illegible] "There is another [illegible] which will bring us out on a ledge about twenty feet above a spring. It is a harder climb, [illegible] it would be safer. I believe [illegible] it."

[illegible] had vanished, and no voices could [illegible]

[illegible] to strike a [illegible] "Just for a moment, so that [illegible] be sure not to make a misstep."

Obediently Errold lit a match, and in its feeble sputtering glare he noted that he was almost face to face with what appeared to be a solid wall of pillars. Not until Aileen showed him the slender opening between two huge white onyx columns did he perceive the path.

Noiselessly the girl wedged herself into the opening, and with some difficulty Errold followed. They found themselves in a cleftlike passageway, thru which, for a space, they had to progress sidewise, so narrow was it. It was eerie business, in the solid, inky blackness, with the uneven, slippery floor making each step uncertain, and it was with distinct relief that Errold saw far ahead a smoky glare showing thru a slit in the blackness.

With infinite caution they felt their way over the slippery rocks toward this light. They walked noiselessly, as, at this point, the footing was of moist clay upon which their steps made no sound. Creeping up a sloping rise ahead of them, they peered over the top, and there before them was the entire moonshiners apparatus, and the men busily engaged in making illicit whisky.

A great, circular amphitheater spread itself before their gaze, lit by the fitful glare of half a dozen pine torches. Near the center a great cluster of white columns, looking like a fountain petrified, rose straight from clay floor to onyx ceiling. Half a dozen feet to the right of it, a hogshead had been sunk into the floor, in which a brown mass bubbled and boiled intermittently. Errold knew at once that this was the fermenting vat where the malted grain was slowly being turned to alcohol.

Much nearer the stone fountain was a blackened retort of copper, under which a fire of glowing oak coals was carefully tended by one of the workers. A copper pipe led from this retort to a little rock basin, which had been formed by centuries of dripping water, where a cold, clear spring bubbled. In this basin the pipe was coiled around and around, emerging finally at the lower end as a sort of copper spigot from which came a ceaseless drip as the drops of the condensed distillate fell into a small keg beneath.

The entire scene etched itself into Errold's consciousness with photographic rapidity. Batchelor was attending to the fermenting vat for the moment, and ordered one of the men to open the retort and put in some more of the brown liquid to be distilled. With characteristic rapidity, and before the girl by his side could even guess his intention, Errold had acted.

One catlike spring propelled his flying body over the low rampart behind which he and Aileen had cowered. The next rush sent him straight at Batchelor. One of the men, seeing this apparition come flying out of the blackness into the uncanny glare of the torches, shrieked "Hit's a ghost!" and collapsed by the stone basin. The others leaped up, but before they could so much as turn, Errold, in all his cold fury, was upon the nearest.

With a smashing blow he sent the man down beside the vat, out of the battle for the time, at least. Batchelor, meantime, had turned. His first look into Errold's eyes, brimming with fury, caused his face to blanch white in terror. For a moment he thought that the dead had come to life for the purpose of vengeance. A glimpse sideways, however, showed him the form of Aileen, outlined against the outer edge of the torch glare. The sight brought to him the rage of a madman coupled with the desperation of a cornered tiger. He knew he must kill Errold.

Snatching a revolver from his pocket, Batchelor trained it upon Errold, as the latter was gathering himself to spring upon him.

"Stop!" he grated. The sight of the pistol halted Errold [illegible] he knew Aileen was standing directly behind him, and that she would be shot if he ducked his head. The trigger finger of Batchelor slowly [illegible] backward and the hammer began to raise.

Bang! Fire flashed from the barrel, and the thud of a bullet was heard. Aileen screamed piercingly. Then came the angered voice of Pop Rydon and Errold saw that the old man had knocked [illegible]

[illegible]

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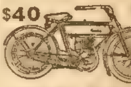

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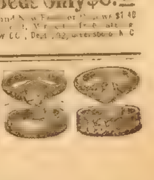

Rydon jumped to his feet and met one of them. The other suddenly felt the strong arms of Aileen around his neck and shoulders, nearly strangling him in a half-Nelson she had learned in one of her college gymnasium courses. The remaining man, whom Errold had felled at the first spring, was beginning to regain consciousness.

Errold faced Batchelor, and the fight to the finish began.

CHAPTER XII.

PITCH PINE AND STALACTITES.

NEITHER of the two men, facing each other there, a half-mile back in a cave far under the ground, doubted that this fight would end only when one or the other was dead. Each was confident of his prowess. But Batchelor was not going to make the mistake of turning the fight into a boxing bout, in which, as he knew, he would be worsted by the superior skill of the revenue officer.

He reached up suddenly and seized a torch, knocking all the other lights near him into the spring. With a hissing sound they were extinguished. Behind Errold a single torch glowed. He turned and seized it, determined to fight fire with fire if that were to be the plan of the other's attack. But Batchelor evidently had no such thought. Gathering his mighty muscles, he sprang up the side of the cave like a cat, and broke off a huge white stalactite, which Errold saw in an instant formed a serviceable, tapering club. Swiftly the young man followed the example of his enemy.

Neither of the two paid any attention to the thud-thud of the other struggling figures. They focused their eyes upon each other and cautiously circled about, torch in one hand, onyx bludgeon in the other, awaiting an opportunity to strike. In the flickering light they looked like two cave men carrying on a giant battle for the woman each desired. Red fire seemed to glint and leap from their eyes.

Fearing to tire himself out by prowling about, Errold dropped his club to his side. He knew himself to be a trifle quicker than the other man. Batchelor thought he saw his opening, and rushed like a maddened bull. Errold sidestepped as neatly as any toreador, and the heavy swish of Batchelor's club came down upon the unfeeling floor of the cave.

Errold turned like a flash and struck a swinging blow. It cut the air within a quarter inch of his opponent's head. But the force of his rush had carried Batchelor just out of reach.

Turning quickly, Batchelor attacked more warily. He wished to bear down on Errold and to force him backward toward the outlet to the cave, which Errold had not explored. From side to side he advanced in zigzag lines. Errold slowly retreated, keeping his eyes glued upon those of Batchelor. Suddenly the other struck a mighty blow, expecting that Errold would jump backward to avoid it. Errold, however, did the unexpected. He stepped forward and, raising his stone club aloft, caught the blow upon it as skilfully as ever Friar Tuck caught the quarterstaff of Robin Hood.

Bringing his club smartly around, he then brought it down upon the other's hand, causing Batchelor to drop his weapon. The moonshiner felt himself losing. He dropped his torch from the other hand, and with a quick movement encircled Errold's body in his brawny arms. Errold, in an effort to extricate his arms, was forced to drop both his torch and his club. Batchelor felt that he had the young officer in his power.

"I'm going to drop ye into a hole this time that ye won't get out of," he snarled viciously, his teeth close to Errold's face.

Steadily Errold, despite his greatest effort, was being pushed backward. He struggled to free his pinioned arms, but the mighty muscles of Batchelor held him as tightly as if he had bound his arms by hoops of steel.

Errold felt that he must not be forced outside the open space in front of the still. Immediately back of that, he knew must be the bottomless pit to which Batchelor referred.

Step by step, Batchelor forced him back. At the edge of the open space Errold could feel the other man tightening his sinews for a final effort. He knew that if he submitted to being pushed violently backward it would be the end.

Batchelor was surprised to find, just as he was going to shove Errold backward and to free himself, that the body within his arms went limp. Instead of struggling against him, Errold fell backward, which caused Batchelor to stumble and to fall upon him.

While both men were falling, Errold doubled both fists and shot them with all his might into the pit of Batchelor's stomach. Then, using the muscles which were trained to all sorts of twisting dives into Lake Michigan, where he had gained repute as a swimmer, the young man twisted sideways, doubled up his knees, and with both arms and legs pushed the moonshiner violently onward.

His arms and legs outstretched to hold himself back, Batchelor found himself forced into the very place into which he had hoped to throw Errold. He clutched with curved, talonlike fingers—but he clutched only air. His sprawling body went down, down, down. Horror-stricken, Errold heard a scream and a dull thud and then another, as the falling body struck from side to side of the hole. At the end of a few seconds he heard no more.

It was the end of Daniel Craig Batchelor.

But Errold had other things to think of besides the probable fate of the luckless Batchelor. Whirling swiftly, he hurried toward the glow of the oak coals, which were still burning feebly under the retort. There was no other light in the vault-like chamber, but all about him there were sounds of a continuous scuffle—the occasional thud of a blow, much labored breathing, the scrape of bodies over the clay floor, and thru it all, the ceaseless drip, drip, drip from the retort, suggesting weirdly the flow of blood.

He felt he must go mad if he did not have light soon. Plunging his arms into the basin by the fire, he drew out the floating bits of pitch pine which had fallen into it a few seconds before. He knew that the wood, dripping with turpentine and rosin as it was, would blaze, despite the wetting it had received. Kicking away the retort with one powerful thrust, he dropped the rosiny sticks onto the oak coals. Almost instantly they broke into a blaze, which, after the long-continued darkness, was almost blinding.

By the sudden flare Errold saw that it was high time he came to the rescue of his companions. In fact, apparently the only thing which had saved them from destruction was the darkness, which had made it impossible to tell friend from foe, so that the superior numbers of moonshiners could not be used to advantage against them.

Aileen was the hardest pressed for she had been unable to free herself of her opponent when the darkness fell on the vault, and his superior strength and weight were telling heavily upon her, lithe and active tho she was. Pop Rydon, who was probably more familiar with the cave than the two men who beset him, was entrenched in a crevice between two large stalactites, which made it impossible for his attackers to reach him save one at a time—and singly, the doughty old mountaineer was more than a match for either of the two men.

Batchelor's scream and the retreating sound of his falling body had had the effect of halting the combat momentarily. No sooner had Errold seen Aileen's plight than, with a roar like a charging lion, he hurled himself bodily toward the man, and literally tore him away from the girl. His right hand had somehow encircled the other's wrist. He gave the arm a sharp twist, and then sent the full force of his powerful muscles into one great upward lift. The man uttered a yell that was almost a scream, and fell writhing to the floor, clutching at his right arm, which hung limp at the shoulder. The terrible twist Errold had given the member had wrenched the bone from the socket at the shoulder.

This left the battle two against two, the man whom Errold had first struck having rejoined the fray. Errold was in a fighting frenzy. He wanted to clutch, tear, smash. One after another he brought the two men down with swings which had the entire weight of his body behind them. With Pop's aid, the young man tore apart strands from the rope which had earlier in the day served the purpose of lowering him into Silent Sink, and bound the three surviving combatants hand and foot. This over, he turned to Aileen, who, brave as she was, seemed on the point of fainting.

Clasping her firmly about the shoulders, Errold held her close, while she sobbed gently out of pure exhaustion for a few moments. Pop Rydon put more pine on the fire, and walked over to the pit where the body of Batchelor had fallen shortly before.

Meantime Aileen ceased sobbing and turned her glance toward Errold. Their eyes seemed to melt into each other's in a long, glowing embrace. Irresistibly, their lips were drawn toward each other, when behind them a voice murmured abstractedly:

"Wonder if he has stopped fallin' yet?"

The spell was broken, and the horror of their surroundings rushed over the two young people. They turned to the work at hand.

CHAPTER XIII.

"NONE BUT THE BRAVE!"

IT WAS Sunday morning, and all the world seemed at peace. The summer sun cast its golden rays from a cloudless sky of purest blue. A Sabbath hush brooded over the Big Piney—a hush which was not broken for a long time by Errold or Aileen, who were slowly paddling a canoe up the laughing river. Faintly, from the far-off village of Duke, came the note of church bells, mellowed to wonderful sweetness by distance.

"The bells are ringin'
For me and my gal,"

hummed Errold, mischievously, quoting the refrain of a popular song.

Aileen's reply seemed to be irrelevant.

"Just think, Errold," she said, "it was only a month ago that we lived thru that awful night in the cave. Somehow it seems like a year."

"Time certainly has dragged for me," replied Errold, gayly. "I can tell you, sweetheart, when I was up in St. Louis and Chicago, making a lot of silly reports, and testifying at the trial, I was counting the days till I could come back for you, and it seemed like a weary stretch of time to me."

Aileen blushed rosily.

"Do you know," she said, after a short time, "I can't help feeling sorry for those three boys you arrested. They were really led astray by Dan."

"I realized that, dearest," said Errold, soberly. "I saw to it that their sentences were light."

"I can never thank you enough for keeping poor old Pop out of it," breathed the girl.

"Small thanks to me for that," said Errold. "The conversation we overheard on the night we went into the cave cleared your father of any complicity in the affair so far as I was concerned."

"And so they really promoted you?"

"Yes. I'd done nothing to brag about, but when they told me I was to be chief of one of the big Western districts, I certainly wasn't going to turn them down."

They had approached the little gravel bar where Errold had made his first perilous crossing over the Big Piney. Here they beached the canoe, from which he took a spade and a plain slab of oak board. With this strange burden, they entered the mouth of the tunnel leading to Silent Sink. Once on the floor of the sink itself, Errold began to dig, and shortly thereafter he had completed his task. A shallow grave had been made. Into this the young man silently and reverently laid the bones of poor Walker, who had been killed by the fiend from whose talons Errold himself had so narrowly escaped.

The funeral sermon which Errol preached was simple, but for all that it was worth perhaps more than many an elaborate discourse.

After he had made a little mound of earth over the grave, he placed the oak slab in position at the head of it. A cross had been rudely carved upon the board, and underneath it the words, "For Service."

"It was the least I could do for you, old man," ran Errold's sermon. "But you'll not be forgotten. Every man in the service shall hear how Walker of St. Louis died in action."

Silently Errold and Aileen slipped back thru the tunnel. They breathed deeply of the warm summer air when they reached the open sunlight again.

Involuntarily their hands stole toward each other, and met in a warm clasp. There was no need for words between them now. Inexpressibly dear to each other thru the trials and perils which had brought them together, how could either one ever expect to put their wonderful feeling into words?

They faced each other, there on the tiny gravel beach in the warm sunshine, the river making music at their feet. Their lips met. They thought themselves alone and unobserved, but high above them, in a tree clinging perilously to the face of the bluff, a little brown thrush who had been taking in the scene breathlessly burst suddenly into jubilant song.

The End.

* * *

ETHEL'S STANDARD.

"I can't quite make up my mind," said the girl who likes to talk. "I'm afraid I never could accomplish it in the world—but I've about decided when I'm on earth again that I'll be a girl like my Cousin Ethel."

"Is Ethel a beauty?" asked the patient listener.

"Why, I really don't know," said the girl who likes to talk, in some amazement at herself "You see, Ethel is the sort of girl you never stop to consider, so far as looks go, because you are too taken up with respect for her method of life. All that beauty is good for, anyhow, is to get a woman what she wants and to make life easy for her. So if she can accomplish the same results without it, why she is to that extent all the smarter! No, I'm not cold-blooded in talking about material advantages—everybody on earth, men and women, are headed that way to a degree and you know it! Well, the way Ethel calmly smashes every truism about self-sacrifice and consideration for others and gets away with it would make you sit up and hold your aching head!

"What causes helpless envy to seethe within me particularly is her utter disregard of time. Time? Ethel doesn't know how to spell the word! She never was on time in her life! When she was a baby the nurse sat around and waited for Ethel to get ready to take her bottle, and when she went to school frantic youngsters yelled and shrieked at her front door for Ethel to hurry up. All the living-room chairs had to be reupholstered twice in her young lady days because they became so worn out by restless young men waiting for Ethel to get ready for the theater or dance!

"As for myself, if I'm not already at the breakfast table when my family arrives, my father explodes at my laziness, or else my mother comes upstairs to ask whether I am ill, and the whole family is upset! The time my watch was slow and I wasn't ready when Ted Harbeck came for me to go to the theater, what happened? Did he smile and say to himself: 'Dear little girl! She can't bother that curly head of hers over hours and minutes!' and patiently read a magazine till I chose to come down, with the taxi ticking away like mad outside? I should say he didn't! Ted is going to be captain of finance or something big and tremendous and ruthless some day! He just stepped to the foot of the stairs and shouted: 'Great Scot, Susan! Whachu doing? Don't you know we're late now and the taxi's eating dollar bills with mint sauce outside this minute? Hustle up, for Pete's sake!' And I hustled so fast that I forgot to powder properly and wore a shiny nose all evening meekly.

"Ethel wouldn't have done it. She hasn't any nerves. She would have deliberately finished her toilet and descended to her fuming friend looking a perfect dream, sweetly smiling, and manlike, he would have forgotten at once about the delay! Necessarily, Tom couldn't forget it all evening.

"No relative ever dreamed of calling Ethel when a button came off and had to be sewed on in a hurry, and you never heard the wild family slogan: 'Ethel, haven't you seen my cap or my pocketbook or laundry list—quick!' Ethel would probably be manicuring her nails, and people couldn't wait for her to dry her hands, disentangle herself from perfumed water, polish, buffers and files and hunt thru three bureau drawers for her work basket—which she would discover was empty because somebody else always was doing her mending and button sewing. Anyhow, if she did find a needle and thimble and thread she would come dreamily with her hand outstretched for the button, and when she was informed that the button was lost and please to get another she probably would dissolve into tears and sob that she didn't see why she had to work so hard! It is reprehensible for Ethel's mother and sisters to mend and sew for Ethel as they have done, but it either was that or have her go around disgracing the family. The theory of letting George do it works splendidly if you can steel yourself to adopt it!

"They always give Ethel the ornamental jobs at guild or club suppers or parties. The rest of us fly around like distracted chickens in the hot kitchen, seeing that the biscuits are done on time and that the creamed chicken is just right, while Ethel, looking like a picture, takes the tickets or converses with the guests! We never dream of giving her anything responsible to do.

"Nobody ever pipes up in committee meetings and says confidently: 'Oh, let Ethel handle the planning of the dinner, or arrange for the entertainers, or see about the ordering of invitations!' Not much! We know that if we did so there would be no one fed, entertained, or invited.

"And, moreover, people do not cast Ethel into outer darkness for her sins—they go right on asking her to come, patiently waiting for her to get ready to arrive and dancing around waiting on her after she has got there. And I've concluded I'm an idiot not to be just like her and spare myself all unnecessary exertion!"

"You couldn't do it!" declared the patient listener.

"I know I couldn't!" sighed the girl who likes to talk.

* * *

On His Knees.

"I think," she said, "that he has deceived us all. I don't think he is anything more than a clerk."

"Why?"

"Because, right in the middle of a proposal last night his mind wandered, and he said: 'You could wear a size smaller without any trouble at all.'"

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THE LUCKY THIRD

A Story of Sad Surprise

By Wilder Anthony

"YOU won't quit then?"

At the question, the hard stern lines about Jack Cockran's mouth melted into a faint smile.

"No," he answered, "certainly not. I must say that you've got nerve even to hint at such a thing. I am going to marry Bessie Stevens."

"And so am I," Al Farley declared doggedly. "That being so," he added, after a short pause, "what are we going to do about it? It's a cinch that both of us can't have her."

"Why not let the girl herself decide between us?" Cockran suggested. "That is the usual method of procedure in such cases, I believe."

"It won't do in this one, tho," Farley rejoined. "You know as well as I do that until you came into the neighborhood Bessie Stevens was contented right where she is, and it was pretty near a settled fact that she'd marry me some day. Now she's dazzled by your money and city manners, and, as it stands, it's a toss-up between us. She's going to marry me, but you've turned her head temporarily, and she's making a fool out of me. I won't stand for it. I tell you frankly that you must either get out of here quick, or——"

"Or what?" asked Cockran, when the other paused without completing his sentence.

"Or suffer the consequences," growled Farley. "I ain't much of a talker; but I know my mind in this matter. Unless you pull out of here between now and tomorrow night, you and me will lock horns. Savvy?"

Jack Cockran, conscious of his own great physical strength, looked down at the smaller man, who was sitting on a rock, and smiled sardonically.

"I'm ready when you are, Farley," he said, shrugging his heavy shoulders. "There can be no time like the present for what you want to do."

Farley got slowly to his feet and his pale eyes caught those of his rival in a cold, challenging glare. For a moment, measuring each other like swordsmen, the two stood in silence; then Farley spoke.

"You're a big man, Jack Cockran," he said evenly. "Heavier and stronger than I am; but I've seen other big men, bigger than you some of 'em, that I could lick hands down. I'm not blowing any when I say that it takes a good man to whip me in any kind of a mix-up; but I'm losing time. The trouble between you and me can't be settled permanent by a rough-and-tumble; no matter which of us won, we'd both still have the same notions. If we fight, it's got to be something more than a boys' scrap. One of us has got to be sponged out, according to the way I figure it."

"So that's your game, eh?" Cockran sneered. "You're going to take advantage of your cursed skill with a six-shooter to murder me in what people here call a duel. It's very clever of you, Farley."

"You're wrong again," said Farley, quietly, "and you know it. I'm not that kind of a skunk, and I wa'n't alluding to six pistols. I can best you there; but I aim to give you a square deal, Cockran. We'll make it Winchester rifles; you can shoot one most as good as me, I reckon. But, of course," he sneered tauntingly, "if you're afraid——"

Cockran flushed hotly.

"You know I'm no coward," he burst out, controlling himself with a visible effort. "Whatever hesitancy I may feel is due to the difference in our way of looking at things. I'm fresh from the East, where customs are very different from what they are here. Somehow, our quarrel does not seem strong enough for bloodshed."

"Then you're going to leave the country?" Farley asked, deliberately striking a match and lighting his cigarette.

"No; I'll be d—d if I am!" the other exploded, maddened by the thinly veiled insult. "If you're fool enough to take the thing as you do, well and good. I'll fight you any way or any time you like."

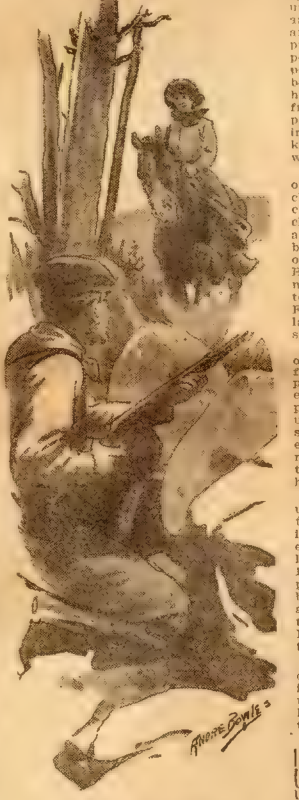
"All right; we'll call it settled then," said Farley, as calmly as tho he were discussing the weather. "Tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock I shall go into the timber on the north side of Big Baldy; if you enter the south side at the same time we're bound to come together sooner or later. I'll have my rifle along, and I wouldn't advise you to stop to say good morning if you catch a glimpse of me thru the trees. The two of us won't come down off that mountain alive. Savvy?"

"Yes," answered the Easterner, "I understand, and I'll be there on time. You may depend upon me, Farley."

He turned and put an end to the conversation by swinging off down the hill toward a little cabin, which nestled in a clump of cottonwoods at its foot. Smoking thoughtfully, Farley watched him enter the open door and disappear from sight.

"The cuss has got nerve," he muttered aloud, as he tossed away the stub of his half-consumed cigarette. "In any other circumstances him and me might have been friends; but it's too late now. I've set my mind on Bessie Stevens, and what I want I get."

Inside the cabin, where he was busy in the preparation of a solitary supper, Jack Cockran's thoughts ran in much the same channel. He, too, had resolved to marry Bessie Stevens—with the self-confidence of a lover he felt that the girl cared more for him than for Farley, in that lonely region his only possible rival—and he was determined to go to any extremity to win her. Personally, in his calmer moments, he had no desire to shoot Farley, or to take active part in the duel; but the affair had progressed beyond the backing-down point. It was too late for him to retire from the field with honor, even if he had so wished.



A girl was coming up.

Despite the fact that he was fresh from New York, having lived but two short months in Idaho, Jack Cockran knew enough of the customs of the country to realize that Farley was in sober, deadly earnest; he knew that he must engage in a fight to the death on the next day. Still, he was not afraid; on the contrary, altho he knew that his rival was a dead shot and a man of undoubted courage, he felt a sort of elation when he thought of the coming duel. Two months in the wilderness had done much to rub off the veneer of civilization which he had worn since infancy, and he was, in a sense, gratified at this opportunity for proving his devotion to his mistress. Farley might kill him; but he could not frighten him.

At exactly 8 o'clock the following morning, carrying a fully loaded, high-power Winchester, Cockran entered the woods at the foot of Big Baldy's southern slope, and cautiously began to make his way toward the summit. Somewhere on the other side of the mountain, not over a mile in a bee line from him, he knew that Farley was doing the same thing, and the knowledge made his heart beat strangely. At some point within the few acres of timber which covered the mountainside the two men were certain to meet, and the one who first glimpsed his enemy might be able to bring the duel to a sudden end; a difference of seconds means much in the exchange of rifle shots.

Like a hunter stalking big game, save that in this case there was a sense of danger and excitement which the most ferocious of wild animals could not inspire, Cockran crept stealthily thru the underbrush, dodging from tree to tree, and pausing every few yards to watch and listen for indications of Farley's presence. At any moment he might expect to hear the report of a rifle, or, perhaps, feel the bite of a bullet in his body. It was his first lesson in man hunting; but he was more excited than frightened. Somehow the thought of possible death never entered his mind; instead, the affair seemed like some new kind of game, a game in which the stake was life, or more than life, itself.

For nearly two hours he slipped shadow-like from tree to tree, and slowly climbed the mountain toward the small clearing that capped its summit. This clearing, a rocky, rectangular opening about two hundred yards in extent, was bisected by a narrow trail which led over the top of the mountain to Pine Butte, the county seat, some twenty-odd miles away. It was Cockran's intention to conceal himself beside it and await Farley's arrival, for he knew that the latter was certain to pass that way sooner or later.

Having reached his destination without mishap, the Easterner lay down at full length behind a large rock and prepared to hold his vigil thruout the entire day if necessary. His hiding-place was well chosen, giving him an unbroken view of the trail and clearing, so that nothing which moved there could escape his notice, and, owing to the nature of the ground, it would be practically impossible for Farley to take him from behind.

A long interval of silence went by, unbroken by any sound save the chattering of a red squirrel and the soughing of a gentle breeze thru the treetops, ere the faint cracking of twigs and dry leaves announced Farley's approach. For a second Cockran glimpsed the peaked top of his rival's felt hat; then, before he could level his rifle, it disappeared behind a little hummock at the upper end of the clearing. Evidently Farley, too, was lying low in the hope that his opponent would show himself.

Thus the battle of patience and endurance began. Each man was waiting for a sight of the other, and each used every precaution against showing himself. Cockran had a slight advantage in that he knew Farley's approximate whereabouts; but this was counterbalanced by the latter's superior woodcraft and marksmanship. Fully aware of his enemy's deadly accuracy with his weapon, the Easterner dared not make the least move toward beginning the fight. All he could do was lie still in the hope that Farley, unaware of his presence, might try to cross or circle the clearing. Such, indeed, might have been the case had not Fate decided otherwise.

The squirrel, scurrying about in search of food, came suddenly almost on top of Cockran's motionless figure. With a startled bark it raced up a tree to a point directly above the man's head and began to scold and chatter noisily. Cockran swore softly to himself. Farley, he knew, would not fail to interpret the incident correctly; the squirrel had given away the Easterner's hiding-place, and now the two were on even terms. Hugging the ground behind his rock, Cockran peered at the spot where he had seen Farley's hat. For a moment he thought of making a detour thru the woods in an attempt to approach the other from behind; but he dismissed the idea as impracticable. Farley was too clever to be caught napping in such a manner.

Becoming restless, however, Cockran bethought him of another expedient. Placing his hat on the end of a stick, he elevated it above the rock. Instantly there was a loud report, and the hat was twitched violently to one side—proof positive that Farley was wide awake, and that his marksmanship had not been overrated. Apparently the ruse was well known to him, too, for he did not show himself, as Cockran had hoped, in an effort to ascertain the result of his shot.

Slowly the sun rose to its zenith and then began to decline; noon came and went, and it was mid-afternoon when Cockran was aroused from his ceaseless

(Continued on Page 23.)

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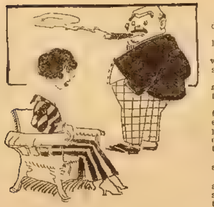


"If you had your life to live over again you'd probably make the same mistakes."

"Probably. And if I did marry some other woman she'd doubtless turn out the same."

◆

He Had to Give Up.

"It's no use," sighs the nature wizard. "I may as well give up."

"What is bothering you?" we ask, sympathetically.

"I got started a few years ago on a whim of mine. I took a head of cabbage and crossed it with a white potato and grew eyes on it; then I crossed that with a cornstalk and grew ears on it; then I crossed that with a squash and grew a neck on it; then I crossed that with a cocoanut and grew hair on it, but hanged if I can figure out what to do for a nose and mouth."

The Crux.

He'd never really been keen on soldiering.

He'd only gone into the Army because he couldn't very well avoid it.

But hitherto he had gone thru with it without making a conspicuous ass of himself.

Now, however, that the moment was at hand, the moment that would really test him, he knew himself for a coward.

He felt a worm, a jelly-fish, no man—he felt, in fact, a conglomeration of all the emotions that analytical novelists, depicting their heroes in blue funk, had described at length in the days before there was a paper shortage.

And the earth refused to open and swallow him.

And even the opportunity of running away was denied him, for the brutal sergeant—he'd always disliked that particular sergeant—had set him in front of the first rank inside the hollow square and was huskily whispering in his ear: "Now, me lad, if yer will be a blinkin' hero, go up and take yer medicine."

"Corporal Smith," called an officer, reading from a paper.

And Corporal Smith guiltily crawled forward to receive from the hands of the general the decoration he had earned in France.

◆

Keeping Silent.

"I couldn't get out of marrying her," Henpeck explained. "When she proposed she said 'Will you marry me? Have you any objection?' You see, it [illegible] matter whether I said 'Yes' or 'No'; [illegible]."

"Why didn't you keep silent, then?" inquired his friend.

"That's what I did, and she said 'Silence gives consent,' and that ended it."

His Beginning.

As the result of lectures administered to him by both his father and the young woman of his choice a certain young man decided to turn over a new leaf and show some interest in business.

"Well, Molly," said he to the girl one evening, "I am really going into business in earnest. Made a beginning already today."

"Good!" exclaimed Molly. "And what was the nature of your start?"

"I ordered my tailor to make me a business suit."

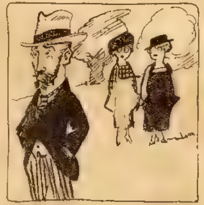
◆

A Puzzle to Her.

"Good morning, Mrs. O'Flaherty. And has yer husband been called up yet?"

"Not yit, Mrs. Maclagan, thanks be! He's got six months' expension because he's doing work of rational deportment. They've put him into seminary duty abroad; but when I thinks of the trouble I has to get him up every morning and off to work, it's a fair puzzle to me how the Government'll be able to call him up. If his own wife can't call him up, who in the wurrld can?"

◆



[illegible] "So [illegible] grew whiskers just to please her?"

Bess—"Yes; she wanted an excuse for shaking him."

◆

He Lost a Pupil.

Father—"My daughter has studied music for a year now, and has not made the least progress."

Music Teacher—"It is not the fault of the piano, my dear sir. There is one in the shop near here that your daughter would learn to play in a very short time."

Father—"H'm. What is there special about it?"

Music Teacher—"Well, to look at it, it is very like this one, but you play it by turning a handle."

◆

Sure of Acceptance.

A young writer who has been rather unfortunate in the matter of sales recently confided to a friend that he had at last written something that he was sure would be accepted by the very first magazine to which it was sent.

"You don't say!" exclaimed the friend, interested, "and what is it?"

"A check for a year's subscription."

◆

A Present.

Mrs. Stingy—"Dear, the baby has swallowed a penny. What on earth shall I do?"

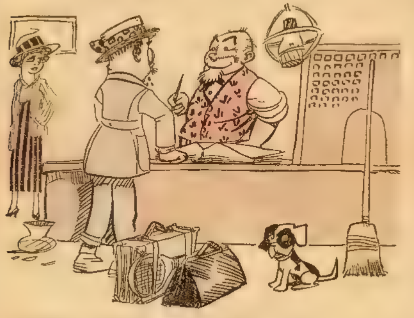
Mr. Stingy—"Oh, well, let him have it. Next Thursday is his birthday, anyway."

◆

Ever Happen to You?

Tommy—"Uncle, what's chagrin?"

Uncle—"Well, it's what a stout man feels when he runs and jumps into a train that doesn't start for twenty minutes."



New Guest (to hotel clerk)—"Any amusements here?"

Clerk—"Oh, plenty—you'll enjoy hearing the new arrivals kick about the grub and the beds!"

The Defaulter.

Private Doolan, after serving three weeks in the army, was brought before his officer for some petty offense. Therefore he sent this touching epistle to his mother:

"Dear mother, I am now a defaulter."

His grief was too great to write more, so he got a comrade to post it for him and set himself down to do his punishment in silence. Five days later he got this:

"My dear son, I'm so glad to hear of your promotion. Be sure and be kind to the men under you, and never forget you were a private once yourself."

All Wrong.

"Any conundrums this morning?" asked the blond stenographer at breakfast.

"Yes," replied the thin border. "Why is a woman like wine?"

"Because she's sparkling," suggested the ribbon counter clerk.

"No."

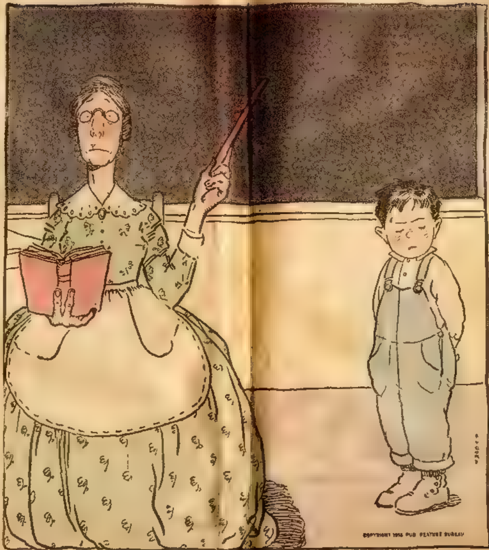
"Because she's full of spirits," was the guess of the bank clerk.

"Nix."

"Well, because she's so intoxicating," ventured the typewriter with powder on her nose.

"All wrong. Because she doesn't age rapidly."

"BEN BOLT"---The Kid That You Were Yourself.



Don't you remember the black day, Ben Bolt;
When you had to stand up for an hour
Before the whole school for breaking the rule?
And didn't Miss Perkins look sour?

SAMMY TO MARY JANE.

There, can the weeps and cut the sigh,
And quit your mournin' and your holler'n,
I'm not "a-goin' forth to die."
I'm goin' to swat Bill Hohenzollern!
I'm goin' to fight and live, Old Dear;
I'm goin' to get the other fellow,
Surrenderin' in advance to fear
Of death, strikes me as sort o' yellow.

"I-die-that-liberty-may-live"—
Where did you get that silly chatter?
A long and happy life I'll give
To liberty—that's what's the matter!
There's room for her and you and me—
But not for Bill—on this here planet;
I'm on my way to get Bill, see?
Conserve your grief, now, kiddo; can it!

◆

Her First Cry.

"Darling," said she, "do you love me as much as ever?"

"Yes, dearie," said he, with his nose buried in his newspaper.

That ought to have satisfied her, but she had to ask: "Why?"

"Oh, I dunno. Habit, I s'pose."

The Rebound.

"Look here Jones, I simply can't stand your wife's extravagance."

"Eh! Whatyamean, you can't stand it?"

"Every time your wife gets a new gown or hat my wife demands one just as expensive. I tell you, it's deuced tough on me."

◆

Stronger.

Mrs. Whillie—"Do you darn your husband's socks?"

Mrs. Jones—"I address them a little more profanely than that."

AN ADAPTABLE POEM.

They stood beside the open grate
(For summer substitute a gate),
She was blonde (if you prefer
Why, make a brunette out of her)
He spoke of love (they all do that),
And she? Her heart went pit-a-pat
The speed, why you yourself can fix,
From seventy up to ninety-six.
She hung her head; she blushed, she sighed,
She laughed or possibly she cried.
Just take your chance, have her do
Precisely as you wish her to.
She did et cetera, until
Her George, or Jack or Jim or Will,
Or any name you like the best
But why go on? You know the rest.

◆

The Maid Meant Well.

"I want to see Mrs. Smythe," said the visitor.

"You can't," said the servant. "She has the toothache."

"You must be mistaken," the man replied. "I'm her dentist, and I have her teeth in this package."

Couldn't Shuffle 'Em.

Levi looked very dejected. That morning he left the house with $20 in his pocket to try his luck at the races, but, alas! he had returned at nightfall footsore and weary, and nothing in his possession but a bad penny.

No wonder his better half was in a bad temper. "How is it," she snapped, "that you're so unlucky at the races and yet you always win at cards?"

"Well, my dear," responded Levi, meekly, "you see, it's this way: I don't shuffle the horses."

◆

Doris' Idea.

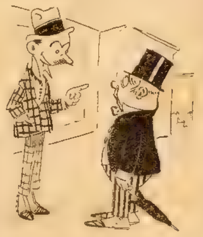
Doris' father raised chickens, and Doris understood all about setting hens. One day she was taken to see the new litter of puppies. They were curly black balls cuddled down beside a smooth tan mother.

"Are those really Emmy Lou's puppies?" Doris asked.

"Yes, dear," she was told.

"Well, then," she remarked in a disgusted tone, "she couldn't have sat on her eggs."

◆



Brown—"Why so worried?"

Jones—"My wife has eloped with the chauffeur and he is such a vacillating chap."

◆

Quite True.

One of the attractions of the church fete was a fortune-teller's tent.

A lady took her 10-year-old, red-haired, freckled son inside. The woman of wisdom bent over the crystal ball.

"Your son will be a very distinguished man if he lives long enough!" she murmured in a deep, mysterious tone.

"Oh, how nice!" gushed the proud mother. "And what will he be distinguished for?"

"For old age," replied the fortune-teller, slowly.

◆

Giving Him a Scare.

A young soldier had gone to the theater with a friend. The play dragged and he fell asleep. An hour later he was awakened by the voice of an actor, saying:

"We have been here five days."

"Bless me! and I had only leave to stop out till midnight!"

◆

Touchy.

Husband—"Why are you so angry at the doctor?"

Wife—"When I told him I had a terrible tired feeling, he told me to show him my tongue."

◆

In the Park.

"Mamma, what kind of a bear is that?"

"That's a cinnamon bear, dear."

"He doesn't smell a bit like cinnamon."

He Spoke English

"Several years ago I was traveling from St. Moritz to London," said a Chicago man. "I had an hour's wait in Paris at the Gare du Nord, so I got out of the train for a little exercise. Like our own railroad stations, this one was full of hustle and bustle. After a few moments of wandering about I heard above all other noises a man shouting frantically: 'Is there anyone in this place who can speak English?'

"No one else evidently could, so I walked over to where he was despairingly waving his arms (not all 'men from home' are a la William Hodge), and I said 'I speak English.'

"'Saved!' he yelled. 'I must get to Boulogne tonight! Ask one of these chattering Frenchmen where I can get the train for Boulogne.'

"'I would,' I answered, repressing a terrible desire to laugh, 'if I could only speak French.'"—Puck

◆

She Was Out of It.

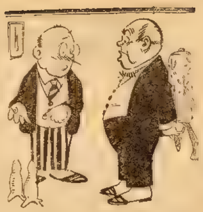
Old Zeb Jackson, the champion whitewasher, walked down the main street of the village one morning, dressed in his best suit, with a large, brilliant buttonhole bouquet, and with cotton gloves on his big hands.

"Hello, Zeb," said the postman; "are you taking a holiday?"

"Dish yere," said the old man with a proud wave of his huge hand, "dish yer am mah golding wedding university, sah. Ah'm celebratin' hit."

"But your wife," said the postman, "is working as usual. I saw her at the washtub as I passed your house."

"Her?" said Zeb, hotly. "She [illegible] nuffin' er do wif hit. She's mah fou't!"



The Collector—"These antique andirons are hand forged."

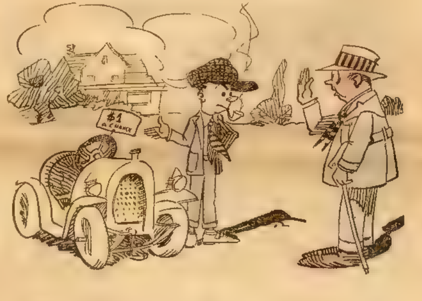
The Chump—"Forged? Well, well! What astonishingly good counterfeits they make now!"

◆

His Pledge.

Dick Brown was very much addicted to drink, and some of his friends determined to get him to take the pledge. To that end one of his neighbors read to him from a newspaper of a man who was so saturated with alcohol that in blowing out a candle his breath caught fire and he was burned to death.

"Burned to death!" exclaimed Dick. "Begad that'll never happen to me. Bring me a prayer book and listen—I, Dick Brown, hereby solemnly declare that as long as I live I will never blow out a candle."



Jones—"I'm raffling off this car—will you take a chance?"

Nix—"I already have a car and I take chances with it every day."

A Just Debt.

A Western lawyer, it seems had been so unthinking as to offend a judge, a young man who had not had so much experience as the transgressing member in the practice of the arts of the profession. Recently in criticising a ruling of the court, the lawyer went beyond the bounds of genuine respect. The court announced, in a voice which the offender did not hear distinctly, that a fine of $10 was imposed for contempt of court. "What did he say?" asked the lawyer, leaning over the desk of the clerk. He was informed. Thrusting his hand into his pocket, the attorney said: "I'll pay it. I never owed a juster debt."

Catching the Post.

Pat was walking along the road, when, hearing a whir, he looked back, and saw Larry flying fast and furious on a bicycle.

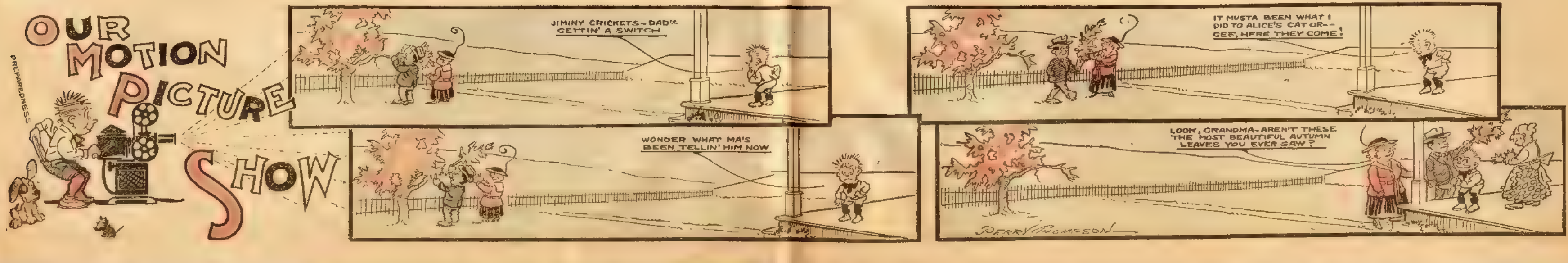
"Hi! Wait a minute!" shouted Pat. "I want to spake to you."

"I can't. I'm in a hurry. I want to catch the post," cried Larry, flying by.

Suddenly the bicycle swerved and crashed into a telegraph pole on the roadside, and Larry and the bike lay in a helpless tangle. As Pat came on, Larry was extricating himself from the wire puzzle.

"Begorra!" said Pat, with a grin. "I see you caught the post."

THE PRICKING OF CONSCIENCE



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PREPAREDNESS
JIMINY CRICKETS—DAD'S GETTIN' A SWITCH
IT MUSTA BEEN WHAT I DID TO ALICE'S CAT OR— GEE, HERE THEY COME!
WONDER WHAT MA'S BEEN TELLIN' HIM NOW
LOOK, GRANDMA—AREN'T THESE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AUTUMN LEAVES YOU EVER SAW?
PERRY THOMPSON

HER DUAL LIFE

Or, The Hidden Lodge

By Ella Martin

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHEF'S SECRET.

HELEN did not find it necessary to call a physician that night, tho she was obliged to work over the little invalid till nearly morning. She was asleep when Beryl arose and went below. She had not dreamed that her friend would venture to leave the room without her knowledge, and so was somewhat surprised on awakening to see Beryl enter the room from the hall, followed by Joan bearing a tray of appetizing viands for them both.

"I ate breakfast with the servants," Beryl announced cheerfully. "You see, I know the habits of the household, and so was sure the coast would be clear. Neither my husband nor Miss Cole rises early; and I knew you were tired out."

"I certainly am," replied Helen; "and I am more than grateful for your thoughtfulness. My walk yesterday was rather strenuous work for me; I am used to pavements, and I tramped over tangled wild growths of every description. I feel the effects more this morning than I did at first."

Beryl looked at her eagerly. "Did you go anywhere near Hidden Lodge?" she asked.

"I went in that direction, and I crossed the road. I must have been somewhere near it," was Helen's evasive reply. She was not ready to take Beryl into her confidence just yet. "Why is it hidden?"

"Oh, it wasn't in the first place. But it was built so long ago that trees and bushes have grown up so thickly around it as completely to hide it from view. I am told that the chimneys are visible to one looking from the third floor windows, and that smoke can be seen, occasionally, issuing from among the branches of the trees surrounding the house."

"What is hidden at the Lodge?" Helen asked. "There is some mystery about the place."

"I do not know. I have often wondered, tho, especially as Rose is so anxious to find out. She seems suspicious of something. All is not right to suit her. And you know she loves Maurice better than her own soul."

"And better than his, I should judge."

"She is jealous of some one, or she would not be so suspicious."

"But she does not seem to be jealous of you."

"No, she knows I do not care where his affections are. But if I were out of the way he could marry her."

"But he wouldn't."

"Not if he could escape it. She loved him before he married Theresa's mother, and tried in every way to part them, both before they were married and afterward. She failed, but Fate parted them instead. A ship on which they had all sailed was wrecked at sea, and husband and wife became separated. Rose saved him in some way, and has managed to keep him by her side ever since. But he has mourned his lost Carmen openly, regardless of her feelings. It is a thorn in her heart, but she hopes yet to win him."

During this time Helen had prepared herself and Theresa for breakfast.

"I wonder what mamma has brought us," she said to the child. "Everything is covered up to keep it warm, for she knew we would have to get ready."

She watched Theresa's eager face as she uncovered the dainty repast, and laughed when she exclaimed at the sight of a large red apple.

"It is Jacques' doings," explained Beryl. "He seemed to take more interest than usual in preparing breakfast this morning."

"Beryl," asked Helen, suddenly, "where did you find him? He reminds me of some one, tho I can't tell who. I forget faces so easily."

"He answered an advertisement which Mr. Tennant had inserted in a New York paper, I believe."

"How strange that every one in this house, but you, Beryl, has dark hair and eyes. Also the man on the train I told you of was dark and mysterious looking. It's interesting, but it's almost uncanny. And by the way, I found my locket and chain last night."

"You found it? Where could it have been?"

Helen lowered her voice that the little one might not hear. "It fell from Mr. Tennant's pocket while he sat by Theresa's bedside last night. He pulled it out with his handkerchief without noticing it."

Beryl sank back in her chair, white and limp. Helen feared she was going to faint, and sprang forward, but the other recovered instantly.

"What is the answer, Beryl?" Helen insisted. "He is nothing to you. Tell me all you can. If I am to help you, I must not be left in the dark. How do you suppose he came by that necklace?"

"I do not know, Helen. There are lots of things about these people I do not understand. They have kept me in a semi-state of hypnotism, one or the other of them, ever since he brought me here, and I am just beginning to realize what has caused my present condition."

"Was Jacques absent that day? I have seen those eyes somewhere, but——"

"Not that I know of. I hadn't left my room for several days."

"I cannot understand it at all," said Helen, puzzled. "But I am going to wear the necklace in plain sight, and see if either Maurice or Jacques notices it. Now I will go down and fix a seat on the lawn for Theresa. I am going to take her out today."

Later, when the nurse entered the kitchen, she paused and gazed directly at the chef for some time. He returned her gaze, but his eyes were the first to waver, at which she smiled.

"Ah!" she breathed, so low he did not catch the words. "One mystery, tho not exactly solved, is not so deep as it was before."

She seated herself by the window which overlooked the rear yard and the forest beyond, and watched him keenly. Jacques, after replying to her greeting, turned his back on her abruptly. Apparently he felt he was discovered, despite his newly acquired mustache and goatee.

"Are you feeling particularly offish this morning, Jacques?" she inquired. "You are behaving exactly as you did when I first came—avoiding my scrutiny."

He faced about and returned her stare. "Well?" he said

"You remind me so much of the man who robbed me of my necklace on the train. Only he had but a mustache."

"You were robbed of a necklace while coming here? And by a man who wore a mustache? Ah, I am glad I found that out! And do you suspect me?"

Again Helen smiled. "Hardly," she replied. "I wanted to tease you, to settle an old score."

He approached her eagerly, and lowered his voice. "I was hoping you would recognize me, Helen. I would die in this place without——"

"Me to quarrel with," she finished, as he hesitated.

"I'd rather quarrel with you than live in peace with any other woman on the face of the globe, Helen. I've found that out during the past five years."

"Thanks. And I can keep my end of the jangle up pretty well, now. I don't mind it as I used to."

"You'd ought to have done that before, instead of flying off the handle because I teased you. Why, that was just my way of making love to you."

"Well, we'll let bygones be bygones," she said; "but if that is the way you still make love, I'd advise you to change your method if you expect to win any sane woman."

"Oh, I've changed, too!" he said eagerly.

"Well, to change the subject, Neil——"

"Hush! Not that name here!" he whispered. "I'm Jacques here, remember that." He glanced around to make sure no one was nigh.

"Very well; but do tell me how you learned to cook."

"I took a course in cooking to fit myself for this sort of job. But I'm holding my place by a bluff more than anything else. They are not very particular here; they are glad to get any one who will stay, I fancy. No woman cook would ever remain. She would get frightened at the ghosts, I imagine."

Helen's blue eyes twinkled. "And what do you know about the ghosts, pray?"

"Nothing—yet. But I have been to the third floor, and I have a wax impression of the keyholes in those locked doors."

"Ah, now I know your secret, and why you have grown that disguising mustache and goatee. You are a detective, and Dick Dallas' assistant."

"I was thinking of declaring myself to you, Helen. You see, I need advice about the cooking. If you don't help me I'll flunk as sure as shooting and lose my job before the time is ripe."

"Oh, I thought you made such delicious coffee! And that dish—whatever it was that you served me that first morning—was so appetizing.

"Helen, you can't name those dishes I served to you—I don't know what to call them myself. And the coffee just happened to be good."

"I will help you in any way you wish," she agreed; "but tell me about Dick. Where is he?"

"He is in New York. He was injured in an accident, before he got on the case. So he sent me. I will deputize you, Helen. We will work on this case together. Will you do it?"

"Yes, until Dick comes," she replied.

CHAPTER IX.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROSE.

THERESA was delighted with her outing on the lawn; she chattered almost as much as the magpie in the branches of the great, spreading tree above her. Helen had made the garden seat soft with pillows, and had placed the child among them. Beryl was seated in a rocker beside her. Somewhere in that great house, behind one of the curtained windows, the nurse felt that Rose Cole was watching them, with anger and hatred in her heart.

Helen had not had much success in trying to get Theresa to walk, even tho she had supported her so that she need bear no weight upon the affected limb. But she felt that it had afforded the little one some exercise to try, and at least it was a beginning. Theresa's spirits had risen at the feel of the out-of-doors; and, at any rate, her general health would be benefited.

While Beryl was reading a fairy story to Theresa, Helen wandered to the flower-bordered path and plucked some roses which she carried to the child. And all the while she was thinking of the woman shut up in her own apartments with her bitter thoughts and memories. Perhaps, after all, she was to be pitied.

Finally she excused herself to the two, who seemed to be getting along very well without her, and returned to the house. There was no danger in leaving them alone if she herself was with the dreaded ogress. So she went in search of Miss Cole immediately. After inquiring for her of Babette, she learned that the lady was not feeling well and was in bed. She was conducted to her apartments in a distant wing of the building and left to enter alone. She stood hesitating for several minutes after Babette retired, but finally decided to knock. She was bidden to enter, probably, Helen thought, because the woman did not guess who it was that was seeking admittance.

The room into which Helen found herself was large and gorgeously furnished, but was in the same sort of gloom that pervaded the rest of the house. She gave one glance around and went on into the bedroom where, robed in an elaborately embroidered dressing-gown, the tall woman reposed among silken pillows. There were some potted plants in a window embrasure, with flowers of brilliant hues; but none that were pale and delicate. The woman lying there was the only colorless thing in the room. Faded-looking she was now, and sallow, but the fire in her eyes was unquenched. As she recognized Helen a glow of anger rose to her cheeks.

"Why this intrusion?" she cried, partially raising herself to a sitting posture. "How dare you spy upon me?"

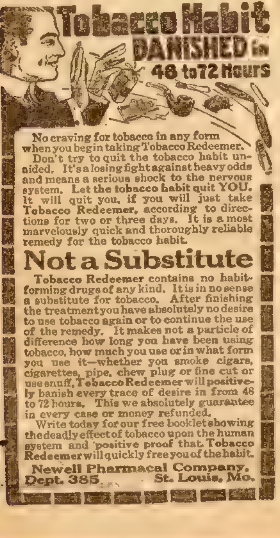
"Spy upon you?" Helen repeated, in astonishment. "I had not thought of such a thing. What reason is there for spying?"

Miss Cole sank back among the pillows. She saw her mistake too late. She did not reply, and Helen said:

"I learned you were sick, and I thought possibly I might be able to do something for you. A nurse's instinct is to aid the sick; and she is always interested when she hears any one is ill. Besides that, I have something I want to say to you—something that will be for your benefit, not mine."

"It is very good of you," replied the woman, sarcastically.

"Now, Miss Cole, don't take that position," urged Helen, earnestly. "I am not your enemy—not against you in any way I would help you as readily as I would help any one. There is no reason why I should force myself into this room, except to offer you my services. My only concern is for the welfare of this household. What I wanted to see you about was to gain your permission and cooperation in changing this place from a gloomy, insanitary habitation to one of sunlight and cheerfulness. I have changed conditions for the others—why not for you? You will wither like a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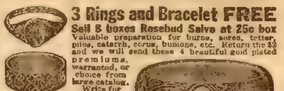
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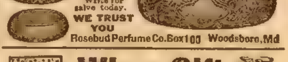
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plucked flower under the depressing influence of so much gloom, I warn you.'

"Wither!" cried the woman, bitterly, stretching forth her hand in emphasis. "Am I not already withered? My very soul is shriveled up under the blighting influence of a mad passion! My surroundings are not alone to blame. And you, a little, insignificant nurse, just graduated from a hospital, have thwarted all my plans!"

"It was Heaven that did it. God would not let you sell your soul for a mess of pottage. Now, rouse yourself, take heart, and win in another way. The obstacle you would have removed at the price of your soul's salvation, I will help you to get rid of in a legitimate way."

"How?" The dark eyes gleamed eagerly, the face, sallow now, without its make-up, relaxed its severe lines.

"We will settle the details later. There is only one stipulation, and that is that harm shall never come to Theresa thru you. She will help you more by her presence than by her removal by any method. But for her, Maurice Tennant would be swallowed up in the silence of a world-wide separation from you—his Nemesis."

"Girl!" the woman cried, startled, "how came you to know so much of this affair? Were you sent here by meddlesome detectives?"

"No, I never heard of this place except thru the advertisement I answered. But I could not help getting a pretty clear perspective of the case from your own talk and actions. You have just made another admission. Why should detectives be interested in your affairs?

Miss Cole did not reply—only glared at her from restless black eyes. Helen believed she could not reply without danger of incriminating herself further.

"I am willing to be your friend," Helen continued; "but my main object is to release Beryl, on whom the master has not a shadow of a claim. He has no more love for the woman he claims as his wife than he has for a beautiful painting or a rare flower. If I may venture an opinion, he has about the same as kidnaped her."

"Yes, and is holding her as a barrier between himself and me. He loved his lost Carmen to the exclusion of everything else, except the child, Theresa. His pretense of spiritual love is only an excuse to keep himself free from her, just as his marriage to her keeps him free from me.

"You wonder why I wanted to be rid of them. They stand between me and my desire. They have upset all my plans. But for them I could do as I would with Maurice Tennant, now that Carmen is dead. But he will never leave this place under the present conditions, tho he would be safer back in Italy. Ah, we were happy there! My chance of winning him was good until he met Carmen Andres. After that he grew indifferent toward me, and I often wished her dead. And now it is so—but I cannot win him. The words, 'Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, nor hell a fury like a woman scorned,' have become engraved on my heart. I would overlook everything yet, if he wished it. But one or the other I will have—his love or my revenge!"

Helen's thoughts flew back to the woman at the Lodge, and she felt that Rose would never be able to attain her heart's desire. But it was not her purpose to say so. She had come here with but one object in view—to win Miss Cole's co-operation in an endeavor to obtain Beryl's freedom. Rose had talked thus freely, she knew, because she had realized that her love for Maurice was apparent to the nurse, and the conversation gave her just the opening she wished.

"It may not be too late yet to win him," she said confidently. "You can make yourself more attractive by a different style of dress—one more up-to-date. Your attire—and everything about the house—is so depressing, when it should be light and airy and cheerful to inspire interest."

"I have kept everything shrouded in gloom, thinking to drive him from this place back to the sunny land of our birth. But tho he claims the house is haunted, he remains here unperturbed."

"Just what is behind those locked doors in the third story?" asked Helen, suddenly.

The dark-eyed woman gave one startled glance into Helen's face; then she roused herself and spoke confidentially.

"I might as well tell you," she said. "It is his secret, and he thinks I do not know. He believes that everybody accepts the ghost story he tells them. But he does not believe it himself when he is in his right personality. He is to a certain extent a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. And—well, I can't explain. Only, he is not wholly responsible. You see, there is a secret door in the closet of his chamber, from which a small, winding stairway leads to the rooms above, independent of the corridor. Those closed rooms contain nothing but his wife's personal effects. He often goes there at midnight, and the sounds he attributes to ghosts are those he makes himself while moving about the rooms. This he does not seem to realize when the spell has left him. It was I who suggested that the house was haunted, to keep him from investigating during his lucid periods. For, naturally, I want him to forget her—the woman who came between us."

Helen pondered over this explanation without seeming to do so; for she was occupied in rearranging the pillows and covering, which always contributes so much to a person's comfort, as she had learned by her experience in caring for the sick.

Should she accept the statement made by the older woman? There were reasons for discrediting it. One was that Rose had been so willing to tell her all this after making such a mystery of what the closed apartments contained. If her explanation was meant to allay suspicion, it failed; for it only served to arouse Helen's curiosity as to what was the truth—the real mystery of the third floor.

Presently the nurse's instinct within her prompted the girl to ask, as she turned toward the window: "Would you like some air? We must make a beginning, if we are to let the sunshine into our hearts as well as our home. So cheer up, and let us think of something to do about it, and maybe we can mend matters."

The tall woman's eyes flashed. She turned her head and asked fiercely: "Did you ever love any one? Did you ever love a man better than your very life—better than your own soul, even. One that you would do anything for, even to shielding him from his just deserts? And—and, in a pinch, commit murder for?"

"No," replied Helen, "I never did, and I'm never going to. It is not that sort of devotion that holds a man's love, anyway. It is the kind that drives him to desperation, sometimes to the necessity of escaping the love that is obnoxious to him. A love that is elusive, one that he is not too sure of, will win response where one so patent as yours will fail."

"I guess you are right. And I believe I shall end by hating him for my wasted youth."

Helen had drawn back the curtains, and, seeing her charges upon the lawn, was reminded that for the second time she was neglecting them, only this time she was obviating the danger she had exposed them to before by her prolonged absence. She returned to the bedside.

"If you would like to get up," she said, "I will help you dress before returning to Theresa. I left her with Beryl on the lawn, and they are both enjoying the fresh air and flowers so much. Shall I have your maid bring you some refreshments?"

"No, thank you. I will ring for Babette when I want anything. I hate the air and sunshine and flowers that you rave about continually. I want to be alone."

And so Helen went back to the two on the lawn, satisfied that she could do nothing for the disconsolate woman who preferred to remain wrapped up in her selfishness and gloom. She would rather make friends with this strange being than to always feel that she had her enmity. But she felt the case was hopeless. And she realized more than ever now that she must be on her guard against treachery, both for herself and others. From her own confession Rose was capable of murder. She might indeed, be a murderess. Was she guilty of Carmen's death—had she contrived it? Who could tell?

At any rate, Helen did not believe the story she had told concerning the mystery of the third floor, and she meant to investigate for herself at the first opportunity. She had not intended to take matters into her own hands; she meant to confine her activities to guarding Beryl and Theresa. But now, circumstances seemed to warrant it.

"Some day, and that soon, I will learn their secret," she murmured.

CHAPTER X.

THERESA'S STRANGE VISITOR.

THE next day Mr. Tennant returned from the city with a number of packages, among them a bird cage containing a fluffy yellow songster. He announced that he had ordered a wheel-chair which would arrive shortly. He was looking well and seemed in good spirits, tho to Helen there seemed to be a change in him—a difference too intangible to define.

He greatly enjoyed his little daughter's demonstrations of pleasure, and helped them to hang the bird cage in the window, and placed a screw hook in the ceiling of the veranda, that the cage might be hung out there on sunny days, while Theresa sat in her wheel-chair listening to its song. His eyes beamed on his child, and in their depth was a new tenderness. The nurse was given the key to this change in him when he turned to her and asked:

"Would not a change benefit my little Theresa? Would a sea voyage do her good, do you think?"

"Yes," replied Helen, eagerly, "it certainly would. But she must have different companionship all around—you understand?"

"Yes," and his eyes were as eager as hers.

Then his face fell; he appeared to remember his fetters, and without another word turned and walked away. Helen understood his longings for freedom and recognized the lions that stood in his path. And somehow her sympathies were with him instead of being with the tall woman who so selfishly loved him.

Later, when the wheel-chair came, she took the little one out of doors every day for hours at a time, whenever the weather was just right.

"Nursie," said Theresa, one day when they were near the highway, where she had never been since they had moved to the big house, "I am glad you came to this place. I was so lonely and unhappy before; and there was no one, except papa and mamma—who is not really my mamma, you know—to love me. Now you love me, too, don't you? You must, or you wouldn't be so kind."

"I certainly do, you little dear!" Helen responded, the tears very near her eyes; for she felt the pathos of the little one's situation in life, and was touched at the yearning in her voice. What heart-hunger she must have felt! She recognized her need of a real mother's love and asked: "You don't remember your own mother, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, I remember her, but not very well. I was at home with my nurse when she was drowned. I wish she hadn't gone on the ship, or I wish she

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Baby Mine
Beautiful Bells
Beautiful Snow
Bell Brandon
Belle of Baltimore
Ben Bolt
Billy Boy
Bingen on the Rhine
Black-eyed Susan
Bonnie Doon
Bonnie Dundee
Bring Back My Bonnie to Me
By the Blue Alsatian Mountains
Caller Herrin
Captain Jinks
Captain With His Whiskers
Charlie Is My Darling
Columbia the Gem of the Ocean
Come Home, Father
Comin' Thro' the Rye
Comrades
Cruelty to Johnny
Die Wacht am Rhein
Dolly Varden
Don't You Go Tommy
Do They Miss Me at Home?
Douglas Tender and True
Down in a Coal Mine
Ever of Thee
Five O'clock in the Morning
Flee As a Bird
Go Down, Moses
Good Night, and Joy be wi' ye A'
Green Grow the Rushes, O
Hail Columbia
Hail to the Chief
Hard Times Come Again No More
Harvest Home
Her Bright Smile Haunts Me Still
Hickory, Dickory, Dock
Highland Mary
Home, Sweet Home
I Ain't Going to Die No More
I Cannot Sing the Old Songs
I Dreamt That I Dwelt
If I Had But a Thousand a Year
I Heard a Wee Bird Singing
I'll Hang my Harp on a Willow Tree
I'll Hear the Trumpet Sound
I'm O'er Young to Marry Yet
In the Gloaming
I Remember
I Stood on the Bridge at Midnight
I've Just Come from the Fountain
Jack and Jill Went Up the Hill
Jess, the Flower o' Dumblane
Jim Along Josey
Jim Crack Corn
Jock o' Hazeldean
John Anderson, My Joe
J[illegible] Has Gone for a Soldier
Johnny Sands
Judgment Day is Rolling Round
Katey's Letter
Kissing on the Sly
Kiss Me Quick and Go
Lanigan's Ball
Larboard Watch
Listen to the Nightingale
Little Annie Rooney
Little Barefoot
Little Boo-peep
Little Jack Horner Sat in a Corner
Little Maggie May
Little Nell
Lord Lovell
Lord Ullin's Daughter
Love Among the Roses
Maggie By My Side
Maggie's Secret
Maid of Athens
Marseillaise Hymn
Maryland, My Maryland
Mary of Argyle
Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground
Meet Me by Moonlight
My Heart Is Sair for Somebody
My Country, 'Tis of Thee
Molly, Put the Kettle On
Miss Wrinkle
My Heart's in the Highlands
My Johnny Was a Shoemaker
My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose
My Pretty Yellar Gal
My Way's Cloudy
Nancy Lee
Nobody Knows the Troubles I See
Nelly of the Hazel Dell
O Dear! What Can the Matter Be!
Oft in the Stilly Night
Oh! Boys Carry Me 'Long
Oh! Had I Wings Like a Dove
Oh! I Should Like to Marry
Oh! Susanna
Oh! Why Do You Tease Us?
Oh! Would I Were a Bird
Oh! Would I Were a Boy Again
Old Grimes
Old King Cole
Our Flag Is There
Over the Garden Wall
O Whistle and I'll Come to You
O Willie Brewed a Peck o' Maut
Paddle Your Own Canoe
Robin Adair
Robinson Crusoe
Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep
Rock Me to Sleep, Mother
Roll, Jordan, Roll
St. Patrick Was a Gentleman
Salley in Our Alley
Scots Wha Ha'e Wi' Wallace Bled
Seesaw, Margery Daw
See, the Conquering Hero Comes
Shells of the Ocean
Simon the Cellarer
Sing a Song of Sixpence
Sparkling and Bright
Steal Away
Stop Dat Knocking
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
Take Back the [illegible]
Ta-ra-ra Boom-d[illegible]
Ten Little Niggers
The Angel's Whisper
The Arm Chair
The Battle Cry of Freedom
The Blue Bells of Scotland
The Blue Juanita
The Burial of Sir John Moore
The Campbell's Are Comin'
The Charming Young Widow
The Cork Leg
The Cruiskeen Lawn
The Danube River
The Dustman
The Girl I Left Behind Me
The Harp That Once Through Tara's Hall
The Laird o'Cockpen
The Land o' the Leal
The Little Brown Jug
The Lame Fisher Maiden
The Maiden's Prayer
The March of the Cameron Men
The Minute Gun at Sea
Then You'll Remember Me
The Old Arm Chair
The Old Oaken Bucket
The Pauper's Drive
The Pilgrim Fathers
There is a Green Hill Far Away
There's Nae Luck About the House
There Was a Jolly Miller
There Was an Old Woman
The Rose of Allandale
The Spider and the Fly
The Star-Spangled Banner
The Sword of Bunker Hill
The Used-up Man
The Water Mill
The Widow in a Cottage by the Sea
Thou Art Gone From My Gaze
Three Fishers Went Sailing
'Tis the Last Rose of Summer
Turn Back Pharaoh's Army
Wait for the Wagon
We'd Better Bide a Wee
We Meet By Chance
We're a' Noddin'
What are the Wild Waves Saying?
When the Swallows Homeward Fly
When We Went Gypseying
When You and I Were Young
Where Are You Going, My Pretty Maid?
Where Was Moses When the Light Went Out?
Whoa! Emma!
Widow Machree
Willie, We Have Missed You
Will You Love Me Then as Now?
Within a Mile of Edinboro' Town
Woodman, Spare That Tree
Yankee Doodle
You Never Miss the Water

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had been saved like papa was. Oh——" she broke off suddenly and looked up the road toward Hidden Lodge—"there is some one coming, nursie! It's a lady—oh, such a beautiful lady!"

Helen had espied the woman approaching and had given it no thought. But, as the child spoke, she recognized the lady of the Lodge, and wondered. Wondered why, if her presence at Hidden Lodge was such a secret, that she should venture out upon the highway. As they met and were about to pass, the stranger paused, glanced at the little girl wonderingly, then eagerly, and smiled. She bowed graciously to Helen and spoke.

"Ah, the little girl is ill, perhaps?" she said, in musical tones

"She has been," replied Helen. "She is picking up now, since she has had a chance to get out of doors."

The velvety black eyes lingered on Theresa's face hungrily. She reached and took the hand of the little invalid. "May I kiss the child?" she asked wistfully; but before the nurse could reply, Theresa's arms went round her neck and their lips met. The woman's eyes were moist when she looked at Helen, but she passed on without a word.

A brilliant thought occurred to Helen, at least she prided herself on its being such. "Would you like to have me bring the little one to see you, sometime when we are out together?" she asked.

The woman paused, hesitated, and seemed confused at first; but finally she answered: "Yes, but it must be a secret to everybody up at the big house. Do you promise?"

"Yes, certainly. It shall be just as you wish about that."

"I will meet you here and conduct you thru the maze of trees. The house is not easily found, tho it is not so far from the road as it is supposed to be. I live alone with two servants and do not go out very much. I am not supposed to have company, but I should like to have you and the child come often."

Helen would liked to have asked her name. But what was the use? It would have told her nothing, for it was probably an alias she was living under. What she really cared the most about was to get inside the house, and to learn the way to it. Her reasons for wishing to do so were not quite so clear to her. Only one thing she was sure of, and that was that the beautiful woman was Rose Cole's rival. It was not the memory of a lost wife that stood between Rose and her desires, but this living, mysterious person, whose presence here Maurice had either contrived or discovered. That did not concern Helen much; all she cared for now was to help Neil in his work until Dick Dallas was able to come and take charge of it. Beryl's deliverance was her main thought.

All the way back to the house Helen was in an absent-minded mood. She answered the child's questions mechanically. She was wondering what hold Miss Cole had upon Maurice Tennant that he must hide his ladylove away in a house that was also hidden from public eye. She must hold a sword above his head suspended by a hair. She must certainly have some power over him besides the hypnotic influence she exercised; and it was hard to tell what such a vampire would do if once she became convinced that her hope of winning him in the future was vain. She would brook no rival now, at least not such a dangerous one as this beautiful woman who was, for some mysterious reason, domiciled at Hidden Lodge. Rose had evidently scented some sort of mystery there; but she had [illegible] guessed, she could not have guessed what it might be.

Helen believed that if she could gain admittance to the Lodge she could in some way discover the key to the mystery at the big house, which the master had thought to keep covered by concocting ghost stories to prevent the servants from investigating. And according to Neil she was to consider herself his deputy. Besides, she wanted to indulge her longing for adventure.

Theresa had leaned back in her chair and become silent, but Helen, busy with her thoughts, did not notice that she had fallen asleep until they had reached the Tennant grounds. The air had brought a healthy color to the little one's cheeks, and Helen nearly cried out [illegible] sight of her infantile beauty and [illegible] resemblance to another. She started guiltily and gazed around to see if she [illegible] observed. There was no one in [illegible]t, and she wheeled the chair in the [illegible]e of the big tree and seated herself [illegible] the bench and tried to think. Resemblances to Helen were always illusive; otherwise she would have recognized Neil in his disguise as chef, at first sight.

She was startled at the thought that had come to her so suddenly, and yet she wondered why it had not dawned upon her before. Had she already discovered the mystery of Hidden Lodge, and that without even trying?

Without debating the question further, she wheeled Theresa onto the porch, where she left her asleep in full view of the bird cage, and with a handful of roses in her lap on which to feast her eyes when she awoke. She entered the house, went thru the long hall, the parlor and dining-room, and on into the kitchen without meeting a soul.

"Where is everybody?" she inquired of Jacques, who was at his post as usual. "Do all the servants take an afternoon off at one and the same time?"

"There's no taking an afternoon off today," replied Jacques, "except yourself. Every blessed one of the women-folks—three maids and the cookee—are in the wing tearing up things and making changes never thought of in this house before. Besides, the chauffeur, the gardener, and even your humble servant, have been called up to lift and carry the articles too heavy for the women to handle."

"What's the idea?" Helen asked, but she could guess.

"A sort of renovating time, apparently. A spirit of progression has struck that last-century woman. At least she has started in to bring about a radical change."

"It's high time—don't you think? She must be acting on my advice."

"And so you are responsible? You are certainly an energy-breeding microbe. There's never any monotony around where you are. But if you have started the ball to rolling it is up to you to get in and help do the work. Either go to house-cleaning or help cook for those who are working up an extra good appetite because of your advice. My assistant is busy tearing up velvet carpets that are to be replaced by polished floors with rugs strewn over them."

"I'm willing. What is it you don't know how to cook now?"

"Lamb's stew."

"The easiest thing in the world to cook," laughed Helen.

"Well, it was one of the dishes I served for breakfast the morning of your arrival, and you didn't know what it was."

"One mystery solved," she answered meaningly.

"And another soon will be." He lowered his voice. "I have sent the wax impressions to Dick. You know that I am here to get some evidence against Mr. Tennant that will make him amenable to the law. We had discovered Beryl's whereabouts, but as she was married to him we had no cause for action. Then, on further investigation, we found there was something mysterious about this locality, and we determined to solve the mystery, and perhaps discover grounds on which Beryl could obtain a divorce."

"I thought Dick intended to kill the man who had robbed him of his sweetheart."

"So he swore in his hot-headedness; but that was when he thought she had been wronged. He thought she had been spirited away by some sort of treachery—and he still believes this to be the case. But as he has made her his wife, he has not the grounds for resentment he supposed he had. As the murderer of her husband he could not marry Beryl afterward, and to possess her is his main object."

"Well," remarked Helen, thoughtfully, "I believe you would have made more rapid progress in your work of ferreting out the truth if you had studied the people here—the man you have to deal with and the woman who rules him by the power of suggestion."

Jacques regarded her in amazement. He had not thought of that.

"Verily," he remarked, "it takes a woman to divine people's thoughts and intentions. But how could I do all that while chained to the kitchen range? Just what do you mean?'

"Why, in becoming acquainted with the temperaments, principles and dispositions—in fact, the inner persons of these two, I have arrived at a pretty close guess, I believe, as to what the secret is they are trying so hard to con[illegible]. They have both overreached them[illegible] and I shall know what it is [illegible] hiding before you have time to get [illegible] your wax impressions."

"How?"

He looked her in the eye as he uttered the one word. But Helen did not explain how she meant to go about it; for she was not sure of finding the door to the little winding stairway in Maurice's room. It was probably concealed in the wall, with a secret spring to operate it, which might be difficult to locate. Instead of answering his question, she said

"Miss Cole explained at some length just what is behind those locked doors, but if what she told me is true, there would be no reason for secrecy. If they had explained in the first place that the personal effects of his lost wife are stored there, no one would have given the matter a second thought. But I had not been in the house an hour before both the housekeeper and Mr. Tennant led me to believe the chambers of the third floor were haunted, in order to keep me from ever going near them on any pretext. Now, I know that there is some reason for that move on their part, and as your assistant I shall make it my business to find out. You see that keeping tab on the characteristics of the persons under suspicions leads one sooner to the goal."

"I do not doubt that you are right."

At this juncture footsteps were heard approaching, and both busied themselves about the meal in preparation. It was one of the maids with her sleeves rolled up and an apron covering her tidy dress. She was after more hot water and another scrubbing brush.

"The master won't know the place when he gets back," she remarked.

Helen's mind was alert at once. "Oh, has he gone away again?" she asked.

"The housekeeper sent him into the city after lace curtains and something to replace the tapestry portieres—and oh, lots of cheerful pictures and things."

"Was he surprised?" questioned Helen.

"I think so; but he did as she directed, as he always does," replied the maid.

Helen looked at Jacques triumphantly. Even the maid had noticed the dominating influence of the tall woman over the man who was called master here. And Jacques—otherwise Neil Graham—began to see wherein one might get a better perspective of things by noting characteristics as well as looking for facts.

"Will Mr. Tennant be gone long?" Helen inquired, as the girl was about to leave the room.

"Only until tomorrow," was the answer.

Helen chuckled to herself. He would be gone over night, then, and now was the time to explore the rooms above, if she was to do it at all. But she said nothing to Neil of what she intended to do.

After helping with the dinner she went back to Theresa. She found her awake and playing with the roses in her lap. The canary was singing, and the child seemed in excellent spirits.

"My papa is going to bring me a necklace like the one you wear," she told the nurse.

"Did you tell him you wanted one like mine?"

"Yes, and he said he would get it if he could find one."

"Then he has noticed mine?" Helen persisted, and the child nodded.

Helen was puzzled. She had worn the chain purposely to see if he would recognize it and be confused, but he had given no sign. Was it possible that he had never known it was in his possession? She gave it up. She arranged with Beryl to sleep with Theresa that night, while she took the bedroom nearest the corridor.

Later, when the hour had come, and she had crept softly down the stair and thru the parlor to the door of Mr. Tennant's apartment, she suddenly wondered if the coast was clear. Was it not possible that Rose Cole would sleep in Mr. Tennant's room while he was away, seeing that her own were turned topsy-turvy, and she would not be able on that account to gain access to the closet containing the secret stairway? Rose had told her of it, mayhap, thinking to trap her if she attempted to spy out the mystery of the third floor rooms.

"Anyway," said Helen to herself, "I mean to try, and that, too, this very night."

This unusual story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Human Nature.

"Human nature is a great institution," observed the druggist. "The more I study my fellow men and remark their curves, the more respect and admiration I have for them."

"Every now and then I feel and talk that way," said the county surveyor, "and whenever that occurs somebody is sure to come along and sell me a gold brick or burglarize my hen roost. I'm naturally optimistic, even enthusiastic, where human nature is concerend, but I have had so many umbrellas swiped by bosom friends that there are moments when I take a pessimistic view.

Just now I am feeling that human nature is greatly overestimated, and I doubt whether there's a man in the [illegible] who won't bear watching.

"Yesterday I made a trip in my auto to [illegible] desolate and untenanted part of the county on official business. On the way home something went wrong with the engine of my car. I am pretty handy at fixing such things, and I began tinkering away. Now and then a grand old farmer would come along in his car, and he'd always stop and get out and ask whether there was anything he could do. Two or three offered to tow me to town, fourteen miles away, and several of them got themselves all greased up reaching around in the engine to find out what the trouble was

"Thus they would come and go away, kind, considerate, anxious to help a brother in distress, and you will not be surprised when I tell you that I sat down on the running board of my car and wept out of the fullness of my heart. The goodness of man filled me with emotion I couldn't control.

"Well, I tinkered and fussed and it seemed that I couldn't get the engine to going. The afternoon was growing old, and I was a long way from shelter and refreshments. So at last I concluded that I would walk to a farmhouse and telephone to town for help. The nearest house that had a 'phone was four miles away, and it took me some time to make the trip, for I had to climb barbed-wire fences and was treed for a while by a dog that hadn't had anything to eat for a long time.

"At last I got to a 'phone and got connection with a garage in town, and received a promise that a man would be out to haul me in immediately, so I walked back to my car. Imagine my emotions when I found that during my absence it had been stripped of its tires, which were new, and a lot of my best tools.

"I was standing there wringing my hands and gnashing my teeth and wishing I had some sackcloth and ashes when the garage man arrived. He sized up the situation at once and began doing some sleuthing. He was a natural-born Sherlock Holmes. Without the aid of a dark-lantern or even false whiskers, he announced, after examining the tire tracks around us, that he knew who had swiped the goods. It was Wolfman, a farmer some miles away. 'He has a three-cornered patch on his tire that I put there myself,' said the sleuth, 'and he stopped here about half an hour ago, and his tracks are here, where he pulled your tires.'

"We went to Wolfman's and found the missing goods under a pile of hay. I didn't say nothing much to him. I felt too sick

"For it was Wolfman's generous conduct more than anything else that had made me sit down on the running board and cry. There wasn't anything that man wasn't willing to do to help me out of my predicament.

"When a thing like that happens to a man it takes him about three weeks to recover his faith in human nature."

* * *

Passed By.

The stranger was waiting for the local "fast" train, which stopped at every other station. To his surprise, the train dashed thru when it should have stopped. The stranger turned to the porter angrily.

"How is it that that train didn't stop here? I'll report this to the directors! The time table distinctly states —"

"I'm very sorry, sir," broke in the porter. "It usually stops, but just now the engine driver's had a row with the station master!"

* * *

Absent-minded.

An absent-minded scientist, in the employ of the Government at Washington, recently met his physician on the street.

"I don't know what's the matter with me, Doctor," said the man of science. "I am limping badly today. Do you think it's locomotor ataxia?"

"Scarcely that," replied the physician. "You are walking with one foot on the curb and the other in the gutter."

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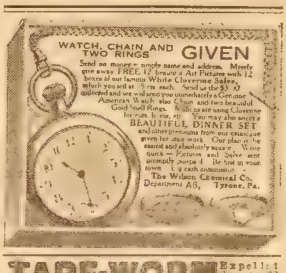

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THE EYE OF SIVA

Or, Pools of Flame

By James E. Casey

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Begun in No. 36, September 8. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BEAT OF THE YEAR.

SLOWLY, almost silently, the window was cautiously shoved up inch by inch! Then a profound silence while the one without seemed to listen to see if his victim slept! And that saved Carter Van Cleave!

Had the assassins come on without hesitation, the poor cub would have been too terrified to move, let alone resist them. But at this instant's show of fear on their part, Carter Van Cleave threw off the grip of terror, drew himself together, and found courage and strength to act.

He sprang out of bed. In a leap, he was at the window. He saw a white-bearded, brown face, a pair of startled, glittering black eyes, a red turban. And then face, eyes and turban dropped in the gloom—vanishing as suddenly and silently as tho swallowed up by a thousand leagues of water.

A "boo!" almost, had frightened away the assassin! He had appeared so startled at the unexpected sight of his intended victim that it must have been in sheer fright that he dropped from his precarious perch outside the window to the hard pavement twelve feet below!

A material weight seemed lifted off Carter Van Cleave's head. He took breath again. Then he bethought himself to look after his assailant, and, throwing the window open all the way, put his head out.

He was just in time. Under the arc-light on the corner, not half a block away, a red turban suddenly showed, then vanished, as its owner sped by. Then another, and then, not another turban, but a swift-moving shadow.

Two assassins there were, he was sure; three, he believed; and that they were the very same Orientals who had murdered Hubert Belasco, he knew with certitude. But what astonished him the most was the precipitate fashion in which, like shadow shapes at a "presto!" they had disappeared.

"Great Heaven, but they beat it quickly! In such a pellmell, panic-stricken way! Terrified as I was, I'll wager I gave them an awful scare, particularly the white-bearded, tall fellow at my window. Looks as if they're not used to coming face to face with their victims. I guess they would rather strike from behind in the dark, as they did with Belasco—ugh!"

He shuddered and looked down at the pavement, an ugly distance below.

"Jiminy! How in the world did that Hindoo take that drop without losing his balance and landing on his head on that hard pavement? Anyhow, I know his soles sting—and that's a consolation! But how did he get up here?"

He leaned farther out

"Monkeys! Those men are regular, long-tailed monkeys! That tall fellow must have got up here by aid of those abutting ornaments. I don't see any other way; and I don't see how he got up that way."

From his coign of vantage, he swept the deserted street with his eyes.

"They ran away as if Satan himself was pursuing them—or better, Siva. But will they run long? Will they come back? If they do——"

He turned toward the bureau. But, almost as he did, he remembered that this bureau contained no firearm, and that the weapon and bureau he had in mind had been sold, with the other furnishings of his den, when he left college.

And so he could do nothing better to protect himself against the return of the Oriental three than to scan the street with his eyes, like a sailor on the lookout. After a while, he pulled down the window and stood within it, gazing out, while another eternity of watching and waiting passed and the rain drizzled down.

"I was right," he thought. "The ruby of rubies in my possession is what these strange men seek. For that, have they come across half the world. For that, they killed Hubert Belasco, and tried twice to kill me."

His hand clinched about the priceless stone he had slipped, upon lying down, into his pocket, and fearfully his eyes searched the street.

"Somehow they are desperately determined to possess this huge gem. At nothing have they stopped; at nothing will they stop to make it theirs. It drew them from far-off Asia, across meridian after meridian, to San Francisco! Desire for it made them plot and plan and break into the Belasco mansion, and strike down unsuspecting Hubert Belasco. And, now that I have become master of it, they have attacked me twice to gain it. There is a key to the mystery."

It was a ray of light from the dark. Carter Van Cleave stood in the window, watching the street, and conned over the mystery. But whereas the mystery had been to the amateur gum-shoe like a morass in which he sank in blackness and could find no foothold to stand upon, now, in an instant, he had found a key to the Great Enigma, and was no longer being overwhelmed by the inexplicable.

He had a motive for the murder of Hubert Belasco. He knew why the Orientals has assassinated the young husband. It was because they desired the monster, pigeon-blood ruby.

At that, he felt as tho he had the Great Enigma almost unraveled. And then, other phases of the crime pulled him into quicksand once more.

"But what had Hubert Belasco to do with the stone? How came it into his possession? Why should it be in his hand when he was killed? Why was he garbed in his wife's green dress and a blonde wig? Why in his wife's boudoir, when supposed to be in Los Angeles? Why the Japanese dagger in his hand? And all at the moment of his assassination!"

But that was not all Van Cleave found he did not know of the Great Enigma.

"What meant the words, 'Cheridah—10,' on Belasco's cuff?—the words of his wife in regard to the red ring and Siva, the Destroyer?—the red cross on the diagram marking the location of the statute of Siva? What had that hideous bronze idol to do with the crime? What connection was there between it and the three——"

Van Cleave jumped. A cry out of the night had startled him. Suddenly, as it came again, he laughed.

"A newsboy! The morning papers, of course."

He listened. Again and again came the loudly mouthed names of the morning dailies, for, like most nocturnal newsies, the crier did not yell the news. He was approaching the window where the young would-be detective stood and thought.

"I'll buy a Mail! Maybe the ban on the Belasco affair has been lifted and the news out! Gee! It might have leaked and some other sheet have got it! The Daily Press, if any! Yes; I haven't got much money, but I had better buy a Press as well as a Mail!"

He threw up the window, as the newsboy noised beneath.

"Here's a dime! Throw up a Mail and Press!"

"Sure, mister!" And, without a miss, the expert on the street did so.

The newsboy had started off, with a yell, when a sudden thought seized Van Cleve.

"Say! I say, did you see a trio of Hindoos in red turbans about——"

"Did I? Three Dago fellers with red skypieces? You bet I did! They threw an awful scare into me! They——"

"Where?"

"Down near the park, mister. They was beatin' it for all they was worth."

"Thank you; that's all."

The cub closed and locked the window, and picked up the rolled papers. Not only was his mind set at ease by the words of the newsboy, but there was a faint show of daybreak, and he feared less an attack from the assassins, who, he knew from experience, struck down only in the dark and by stealth.

He lighted the gas, drew a chair under the light, and opened the copy of the Mail-Tribune.

"Jingo!"

Crowding the outspreading first page, words, three inches high and deep black, sprang up and struck him breathless. They read:

"MILLIONAIRE MURDERED.
"Hubert Belasco, Masquerading as Woman, Throttled to Death, Then Stabbed by Unknown Assassin—Motive a Mystery."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE "SENDING" OF SIVA.

CARTER VAN CLEAVE, as he sat in the bare gaslit room and plunged eagerly down the double column of sensational, colorful words that appeared under the name of Upton ("Scoop") Norton, lived the assassination and the investigation over again.

He found nothing he did not know. He realized he knew tenfold more than the writer. For all the significance of "Scoop's" story was that Hubert Belasco, masquerading as a woman, had been murdered in his wife's boudoir by some assassin unknown. All the rest was artistic sensation—the result of the star's highly colored imagination and truly large vocabulary.

At that, it was the most sensational murder story the yellow Mail-Tribune ever had printed—the beat of the year—and the masterpiece of that star, "Scoop" Norton! For it ended, as the great newsman had told Malachi Courtney he loved to end a story, in a vast WHY. It was a story to bring the city to its feet, pale and gasping with the horror of silent assassination by unknown murderers.

"The deuce!" Van Cleave remarked, ere he finished Norton's article. "'Scoop' has outdone himself! He wrote a gripping, highly colored tale, a thousand times more sensational than if he was not so much in the dark about the wherefore of these sinister circumstances.

"But it will hit the bull's-eye. It will startle and dumfound the city to its foundation! All 'Frisco will ring with whispers anent the 'Belasco Case'! 'Scoop' will be more famous! And my mystery will be the sensation of the year!"

He did not see the paper, now, but clinched his hands tightly on it, in his vehemence.

"And I alone have a grasp on the mystery! I alone have clews and reasons to show the motives behind the crime! And I will yet write a tale for the Mail or some other paper that will answer 'Scoop' Norton's sphinx story. I will amaze this city by answering all their doubts and questions. I will be famous—a star, as I said."

With that conquering confidence in his heart, Carter Van Cleave turned back to the paper before him in an effort to discover some hint or clew that might aid him further to unravel the enigma.

He read thru the second page. That page, as well as the third and fourth, told of nothing but the Belasco murder. All other news either had been cut down and crowded back into the pages next the sporting pages, or been thrown into the wastebasket.

The Belasco murder mystery filled and spilled from the paper. There were photographs of Ynez Belasco, Hubert Belasco, Morton Seymour; a diagram of the house and a sketch showing how the assassination had been done; and stories upon stories, besides the main article by "Scoop" Norton, telling the life stories of Hubert Belasco, Ynez Belasco and even Morton Seymour, accounts of the romantic marriage of the Belascos, of the freaks of Ynez Belasco, and of the industrial ventures of Seymour himself.

And the young fellow, who knew even more of the mystery than any of the many that had written about it, read it all—everything. But he knew what he was about, and, surely enough, when he reached the third page, his search was rewarded. Under a second picture of red-haired, beautiful Mrs. Belasco, he read the following:

"Mrs. Ynez Belasco granted an interview at 10 o'clock last night. At that time she had recovered sufficiently from her overwrought state to answer certain questions put by Malachi Courtney, the police detective, who is doing so much to clear up the mystery surrounding the assassination. Mr. Courtney wanted to know the meaning of the queer words Mrs. Belasco is said to have uttered upon learning that it was her husband who was the murdered man. Before the writer, Mrs. Belasco spoke as follows:

"'My poor husband lay dead at the feet of Siva, the Destroyer—an old, old, Hindoo idol that stands in one corner of my boudoir. Let me show you how peculiar this fact is.

"'This old statue, altho hideous to look upon, is not only very valuable, but is held a sacred thing by a certain sect of Hindoos. Indeed, it is believed by them to be the most sacred thing on this earth, more hallowed and almighty than any images of Vishnu, or even Brahama. For this old, old idol is supposed to be the evil god, Siva, the Destroyer, himself.

"'There are a thousand and one superstitions concerning this very statue: that it has a soul, tho as you know, made of bronze; that it can cast a "sending" across the whole world—that is, strike down a man all in a moment and without a sound, tho he be at the ends of the earth; and that every year it gorges itself on the blood of the men it strikes down in the dark. Its great power is believed to lie in its huge, evil, blazing eye with which it can kill and consume all those it looks upon.

"'I came across it in my travels in India, two years ago, when, in Benares, having shown extreme interest in the strange temples of the Hindoos and their stranger gods, I was told by Colonel Fitzroy McKenzie, then commanding the Bengal Shikaris, of a peculiar find of his. He was one of those who had helped to stamp out Thuggee in India, and he told me of Raijaipur which had been the stronghold of the Thugs long after all their other fastnesses had been wiped out.

"'Colonel McKenzie accompanied me to see this terrible place, which proved to be a peculiar black temple built within a sort of fortress. A few queer priests scowled at us from the dark, and then we saw the great god on his pedestal—Siva, the Destroyer. It was to it the Thugs had bowed and offered up their toll of human lives for years. The great crimson eye of it they believed guarded and watched them ply their horrible trade of strangulation and murder.

"'I no sooner saw this black, bloody god than I desired it for my own. I

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NEW YORK, N. Y.—Most people foolishly seem to think they are going to get renewed health and strength from some stimulating medicine, secret nostrum or narcotic drug, said Dr. E. Sauer, a Boston Physician who has studied widely both in this country and in Great European Medical Institutions when, as a matter of fact, real and true strength can only come from the food you eat. But people often fail to get the strength out of their food because they haven't enough iron in their blood to enable it to change food into living matter. From their weakened, nervous condition they know something is wrong but they can't tell what, so they generally commence doctoring for stomach, liver or kidney trouble or symptoms of some other ailment caused by lack of iron in the blood. This thing may go on for years, while the patient suffers untold agony. If you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while, double their strength and endurance and entirely get rid of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated like nuxated iron if you want it to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete or prize-fighter has won the day simply because they knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray, while many another has gone down to inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.

NOTE—Nuxated Iron recommended above by Dr. E. Sauer, is one of the newer organic iron compounds. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy, in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The Manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 100 per cent or over in four weeks' time provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

endangered my life and spent a huge sum of money on it ere I installed it in my boudoir.

"'Now, when I found it was my husband who had been murdered, I was startled to my soul and crazed with grief, so I could think of nothing as a cause for his death save the mystical and supernatural, and so I attributed his death to Siva, the terrible Destroyer. Even yet a strange, superstitious fear haunts me that Siva did cause my poor Hubert's death. You know the legends—that Siva can send a "sending" that will strike down a man anywhere—that one look into his evil crimson orb and a man will fall dead with a red ring around his throat, as if caused by the strangling scarf of the Thugs. And my husband lay prone at the feet of Siva, having looked into his evil eye, perhaps, for a red ring was about his neck.'"

CHAPTER XXV.

WHAT THE STUDLEY SAID.

THIS explains why the Mail-Tribune splurged on this mystery!" Carter Van Cleave's finger was on the startling interview with Mrs. Belasco he had just finished perusing

"Neither the chief of police, nor old Morton Seymour, but Mrs. Ynez Belasco herself told them to go ahead with the investigation. I can read that between the lines. What else can account for the lack of scandal hints and insinuations of intrigue in 'Scoop's' and all the other articles? Why, they're so sure, from Mrs. Belasco's action, that there's no martial trouble in the case that they did not even mention the note on the cuff, 'Cheridah—10.'"

He threw down the newspaper and got afoot.

"Now, where do I stand?" he asked the room. "Here I think I'm something of a Sherlock Holmes and call myself the one man who is on the true track of the mystery—and where do I stand? I say that the motive for the assassination was my monster, pigeon-blood ruby. I feel confident that it was to get this treasure that the three assassins came across the whole world and struck down Hubert Belasco! But what says the paper?"

Chin on hand, he stared down at the newspaper outspread on the floor.

"Four fake stones it mentions as being found upon the murdered man—two imitation pearls and a crude copy of a ruby in his silver cigarette case, and another red stone in his hand at the base of Siva. But of my real priceless ruby it knows nothing, absolutely nothing:

"Now, Mrs. Belasco," he went on. "From her account, it would appear that the idol of Siva itself was the cause of her husband's assassination. A 'sending,' she terms it; but under any name, it cannot be considered in this age. My motive about the precious red ruby drawing these Hindoos across the seas to slay Belasco—isn't that twice as plausible and a thousand times more reasonable? And why was I attacked not once but twice, if not——"

Of a sudden, his hand fell from his chin, his head dropped down, and the sentence remained unfinished, as he stared down at the paper flat on the floor. A small item of news right under the three-inch scareheads and not three columns removed from "Scoop's" great article, had caught his eye.

Technically, it was what is called, in news offices, a "studley," from the fact that it either is a paragraph of very interesting, gossipy news, or a slice of a big story that "broke" just as the paper went to press, but was squeezed in, tho time and space were at a premium.

And it said that, during the very while Carter Van Cleave waited in his room for the Oriental assassins, from the boudoir of Mrs. Ynez Belasco had mysteriously disappeared the sinister, bronze idol of Siva, the Destroyer.

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"Well, I'll be d—d! Those three Orientals are as bold as they are desperate. It's they, I'm sure, who took the god! And that means it's the treasure of Ynez Belasco, evil Siva, they want—not my ruby of rubies, after all!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

"CHERIDAH—10."

A MOMENT Carter Van Cleave stared down at the paper and thought. Then, suddenly, he snapped erect, his face aglow.

"I've got it!" he howled with joy. "Now I know where my ruby comes in! Those strange Hindoos want it just as much as they did old Siva. They crossed the ocean for it as well as the idol. They killed Hubert Belasco for it and the god. They attacked me twice for my ruby of rubies alone. For Siva and the ruby are one and the same. The huge ruby is the red eye of Siva."

Flushed with the rapture of discovery, he strode back and forth in his excitement. Then, to make sure beyond the peradventure of a doubt, he picked up the paper again and reread the studley.

"Right I am for certain! Here the reporter describes Siva, probably from the dictionary, as 'the four-armed, three-eyed god'! And here"—he opened the copy to the third page—"Mrs. Belasco speaks again and again of the 'crimson orb' and the 'blazing eye' of Siva!"

Carter Van Cleave, satisfaction brimming in his eyes, paced the narrow room.

"I thought those were cryptic remarks of Mrs. Belasco; never dreamt of the ruby in the connection; but now I know that, with the two white pearls, that ruby makes up what the reporter termed 'Siva's three eyes'! The ruby is the 'crimson eye' that Ynez Belasco spoke of as evil! And—Great Heaven! So that is where my ruby of rubies belongs—in that round, deep hole in Siva's forehead!"

Right then, Carter Van Cleave, from the heights of astonishment, plunged into the deeps of wonder. How had the red ruby eye become separated from Siva? Then it struck him. Perhaps the ruby, already loose in its socket, had rolled to the floor against Hubert Belasco's outflung hand, when the assassins three had made to take away the idol after the murder had been done.

"That's it! The ignorant Orientals were frightened to their superstitious hearts at seeing the blazing, crimson eye of Siva drop to the floor. I'll wager it was that, not the butler, that caused them to run away down the crimson cloth and leave the statue behind them, the first time. But now they have been successful in getting Siva, and they will want it intact, whole. Will they not desire the red eye of Siva more than ever?"

The former reporter shuddered, for he realized what that meant. The Oriental three would train all their energies against him in efforts to recover the ruby. He shivered again at the thought, and was glad to turn to other phases of the perplexing mystery.

"Why," he asked himself, "did Hubert Belasco masquerade in a green velvet dress and a blonde wig? Why in his wife's boudoir, stiletto in hand in the dead of night, when supposed to be miles away? And why the scribbled 'Cheridah—10,' on his cuff? I know almost everything but those riddles, but I'm stumped by them! Well, I give it up for the present! I'm dizzy already from puzzling my brain. Let's see what the Press has got on the Belasco case."

He opened the other paper he had purchased and, after one glance, broke out with a chuckle.

"Good for the Mail! They've beat the city! They 'scooped' every other paper in town by being the only sheet to print the great murder mystery! And altho they fired, me and Patullo called me down like a regular brute, I can't help saying, 'Good!'"

Surely enough, the copy of the Daily Press bore only the commonplaces of everyday news; there was not so much as a hint of the murder mystery; and Carter Van Cleave was about to cast it down in disgust, when a sudden discovery caused him to change his mind. Under a small photograph of a man and a one-column head, on the first page, appeared the regular news-story of a prominent stock gambler, who had chose to be a deserter from life rather than live in disgrace and penury.

The man was Holman Granfield, the New York operator, husband of Cheridah Shannon, the star of opera bouffe; the same man who once had cornered the cotton market, then failed and been forced out of Wall street.

The mention of Cheridah Shannon, and also what he had read in the heads, caused Carter Van Cleave to read rapidly on. The article went on to tell how Granfield, while in New Mexico recovering his health, after that strenuous period in Wall street, had chanced upon an undiscovered copper mine. The vein had proved rich. The stock, sold on every side, continued to go up and up, until the operator began to think himself "Lucky" Granfield once more.

Then, of a sudden, had come the crack of doom. The vein worked out. The bottom fell out of the market and all that stock plumbed down, down into a pit without a floor. The one-time millionaire was totally wiped out. He shot himself.

The article hardly mentioned the fact that thousands of speculating stockholders had been ruined, forced to borrow to pay the assessments on their shares, wiped out financially and, not infrequently, physically and by their own hands, like poor Granfield. But it did say that the stock was then as low as ten cents a share, and was called, after Granfield's actress wife, the 'Cheridah'!

CHAPTER XXVII.

BORROWED FROM THE BANK.

AT 9 O'CLOCK that morning, after the lonely, all-night battle with the Great Enigma, Carter Van Cleave sprang to his feet, shrugged into his overcoat and made for the door of his room.

"Here's where I cease being the Thinking Machine, and become a real Vidocq. Now for the mills of money."

As he dashed down the stairs, he made sure that the great priceless ruby was safe in his pocket with the three fake stones. Then he was sprinting for an inbound car speeding past.

He swung aboard, and it struck him to look for those three Orientals who had dogged his footsteps, so often and so well. The car was filled with a strap-hanging crowd of ordinary office people among whom a brown, Asiatic face, or a red turban, would have been the height of incongruity.

With the elastic, swaggering stride that was so characteristic of him, Carter Van Cleave dropped off the street car in the heart of the business section. Plunging thru the maelstrom of life and business on the pavements, he made for a great, granite structure. Entering thru the revolving glass doors, he approached the uniformed attendant who seemed the lord and master of the marble floors, onyx walls and steel-plated vaults.

"I would like to see Mr. Seymour on an important matter," he said. "Is he down? Could you show me to his office?"

The man in the uniform barred the door upon which was lettered, "President's Office—Private," and shook his head.

"Mr. Seymour is not in. He will not be down till——"

"I am Morton Seymour, sir. What is you business, please?"

Carter Van Gleave, startled, swung around. He confronted a very tall old man, with long white hair, grim mouth and statesman's jaw. And at once, he knew that he faced Ynez Belasco's father, old Morton Seymour, the all-powerful banker and multimillionaire.

"Mr. Seymour," he said, "I am Carter Van Cleave, a newspaper man and detective. I am engaged in an attempt to clear up the mystery surrounding your son-in-law's death, and if you would consent to an interview——"

"As a detective, not a reporter, you are welcome." The old man turned and opened the door in the wall. "Step right into my private office, Mr. Van Cleave. And you, too, Mr. Di Fontana."

At that, for the first time the amateur became aware of the man who had been hidden behind Mr. Seymour's big frame. He was a slight fellow of a swarthy cast, and affected a blue-black Van Dyke.

In the richly furnished waiting-room, the aged banker and former cub left Di Fontana and penetrated to a room beyond—Morton Seymour's private office. Here, in a few, conclusive words, Carter Van Cleave stated the nature and purport of his business.

When Morton Seymour, followed by the eager-eyed gum-shoe, re-entered the outer room, where the swarthy man waited, it was palpable that he had been startled and shaken by what the cub had told him. But he ably controlled himself, while he introduced Van Cleave to the man with the Van Dyke, and went on:

"Mr. Van Cleave is a detective of such skill in analysis and deduction, my dear Di Fontana, that I dared scarcely credit what he told me, until he proved it by irrefutable logic. A real Sherlock Holmes!"

He introduced the swarthy man to the cub.

"Mr. Di Fontana, Mr. Van Cleave, is an expert of rare ability on a line somewhat similar to yours. He is an almost infallible detective of figures—an expert accountant, famed from here to New York."

The suave Di Fontana and the youthful Van Cleave gripped hands and measured each other.

"This is a fortunate meeting," the old man pursued. "As I told you, Mr. Van Cleave, I did not suspect my son-in-law of any wrong. Nor is this Mr. Di Fontana's half-yearly inspection of the books. But, as you doubtless know, it is a rule with all banks and most large business houses, upon the death of an employe of trust, to call in an expert right away to examine the books merely as a precaution. And hence it is that Mr. Di Fontana is on the spot at this time when his services, as you have shown me, are so needed."

With that, the old '49er turned to the accountant and gave him certain instructions in regard to his work. Then the old millionaire and young Carter Van Cleave returned to the president's private office, leaving the expert toiling over column after column of figures.

They conversed in low tones, while hour after hour of the morning ticked off. Then, on the stroke of 12, the expert accountant slipped into the room, a white paper in his hand and his swarthy face of an even blacker hue.

He locked the door behind him. Then he faced old Morton Seymour and Carter Van Cleave.

"Mr. Seymour," he gaspend, "Hubert Belasco for the last five months has been doctoring and juggling his accounts. There is a shortage in his books of one hundred and twenty-eight thousand dollars."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE OLD, OLD STORY.

NEITHER old Morton Seymour, nor Carter Van Cleave so much as started at the announcement. Only the old man's face went gray and set, as he turned to the young detective.

"You were correct, Mr. Carter Van Cleave," he said. "My dead son-in-law did steal a huge sum of money and doctor his accounts, as you surmised. Poor, foolish plodder! Why ever did he do it?"

The white-haired millionaire got up and paced the room before the two waiting men.

"My daughter!" he half sobbed. "My poor, proud daughter! That her husband should bring her to this!"

He turned suddenly to Carter Van Cleave. "What did you say was the name of the mining stock——"

"Cheridah Copper."

"The Cheridah! Well, Hubert Belasco was not the only poor fool! But, my boy, do you think that when my son-in-law found all the money he had hypothecated could not be retrieved and replaced, but was lost beyond recall—do you think that then Hubert Belasco committed suicide in despair?"

The young fellow looked full at him and shook his head.

"No!" he said decisively. "He was assassinated by the three Hindoos I told you of!"

The old white-haired millionaire was silent, after that, the while he paced the room, his eyes on the velvet carpet, his face lined by deep and anguishing pain.

Suddenly he said: "But I do not understand! I do not understand why he—my daughter's husband should think to steal money from the bank to invest in that wildcat stock! He was living in comfort, even in luxury, and he had never known that, before his marriage."

Carter Van Cleave thought on that for a time. Then, crossing his legs, he looked up and said:

"I see you do not understand Hubert Belasco's position. Let me explain it, as I have learned to see it from my investigation and my talks with his servants.

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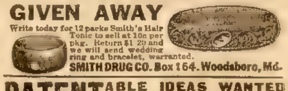

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"Hubert Belasco was a shallow, slow-going plodder of the office type. He was a penniless lodger in a hallroom, when your impulsive daughter, to speak the truth, courted and married him. Did his position change? Outwardly, yes. But at the bottom, however, Hubert Belasco remained the shallow, lonely, plodding clerk of bachelor days.

"He could not move in society. You did not recognize him. He had to work every day at this bank to gain the wherewithal to live. He had a mansion to dwell in and servants to come at his beck or call, but even these showed a contempt for him and his position. The very wife, who loved him, ruled him with a high hand."

The old man nodded that he understood.

"All men feel the spur of manhood telling them to break loose from habit and heredity and be big, commanding—Men! So, even with Hubert Belasco. He felt the servant's disrespect, society's ridicule, his wife's high hand. He realized he was little better off than when a bachelor in that hallroom."

"What then, sir?"

"Hubert Belasco must have seen that if he got money, he could buy, if not win, respect and notice. He read of the discovery of the rich Cheridah copper mine; perhaps some of his friends on the Stock Exchange touted it; but anyway, the bank clerk, who should have known better, thought to get rich quick thru this wildcat venture.

"Yet he had no money! Neither had his wife, for she spent her monthly allowance as fast as it came, and some of his. He could not ask you for a loan, for you know you wouldn't have given it to him. And now figures the old, old story.

"He was handling stacks on stacks of yellow money every day. Why not borrow some of that to invest in 'Cheridah?' He would pay it back when he made his pile! Don't you see this is the old story of the weak and foolish bank clerk in every respect, save only that he happened to be the son-in-law of the president, in this case?"

"I understand," the old man nodded sadly.

"It was a bold try for position and money. He took ten thousand dollars at a time, Mr. Di Fontana says; but that was all right, he must have thought, while the stock was booming up, up. Then it came down, like a spent rocket—down, down; and Hubert Belasco was wiped out, ruined and disgraced!"

"I see it all now," the white-haired millionaire as much as sobbed. "And it was partly my fault!"

Carter Van Cleave did not pause, but continued relentlessly.

"He faced a cell and a striped suit for his crime. Worse than that. The horrible nightmare of public disgrace. So for three days he hid. Then one night he came back to his own house, to his wife's boudoir, with a Japanese dagger in his——"

"Why?" the millionaire fairly shouted.

"Perhaps to kill himself as you say. But then why should he wear that blonde wig and green dress? Why should he attempt to masquerade as his wife and your daughter? Did he intend to kill her? We may never know, for ere he could carry out the purpose in his mind, he was struck down by those three Hindoo assassins from behind."

Carter Van Cleave drew himself together, got afoot, and clinched his hands at his side.

"Mr. Morton Seymour," he ended decisively. "I'm off to find out the solution of those riddles—to put two and two together. I have cleared up all else, and they alone shall not balk my way. I will yet tear the seventh and last veil from this Great Enigma, so that you and all may see."

The conclusion of this interesting story will be found in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. Be sure to read them.

* * *

Risky Now.

"I don't like this poem to your girl."

"Why not?"

"Ivory brow is a dubious compliment."

"Honored by all the poets of antiquity."

"I know. But that was before the term bonehead came in."

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The Lucky Third.

(Continued From Page 15.)

watching by the sound of voices and the rattle of dislodged stones, announcing the approach of horsemen. The trail was very steep at this point, and it was only by moving his cramped body a considerable distance to one side that the hidden man was able to look down and see what caused the interruption. When he did so, his eyes almost popped out of his head.

Riding her buckskin pony at a slow walk, which was made necessary by the condition of the trail, a slim, fair-haired girl was coming up the mountain, closely followed by a young man, in whom Cockran recognized the storekeeper at Pine Butte. But it was not the man who interested him. Far from it. His eyes merely traveled over him, so to speak, and rested in complete absorption upon the pretty features of the girl. Momentarily he forgot everything except that the object of his love was there before him.

Bessie Stevens stopped her pony on the top of the ridge, and waved a small, gloved hand in a gesture which seemed to take in the entire mountain. As her companion drew up beside her, she said something—they were too far away for Cockran to distinguish the words—to which the man replied, and she laughed merrily, turning her flushed, piquant face directly toward Cockran's hiding-place. By this time the storekeeper had come very close, and the next instant, to the watcher's horrified amazement, he had seized the girl in his arms and was kissing her madly.

How long after that he lay there on the ground Cockran never knew, nor cared. It was enough for him that as he watched the two lovers—for it was readily apparent that the girl returned the storekeeper's passion—something seemed to go dead within him. His quarrel with Farley was forgotten, and by the time man and girl continued on their way he could only lean weakly against the rock and stare after them like one in a dream.

Some moments later he was dimly aware of a figure approaching him from across the clearing. He sensed, rather than saw, that it was Farley; but he made no move to defend himself. Let Farley shoot him if he wanted to. It wouldn't matter much after all—now.

Farley, however, did not appear to entertain any warlike intentions. Halting a few paces from his former rival, he regarded him in speculative silence for a few moments; then he leaned his rifle against a tree and produced a book of cigarette papers. Selecting one of the small, white parallelograms, he cupped it, and searched his pockets abstractedly for a few moments, only to remember that he had dropped his tobacco on the other side of the clearing. For an instant he seemed on the point of going back after it; but he came to a quick resolution instead. Half a dozen steps took him to Cockran's side and enabled him to lay a sinewy brown hand on the latter's shoulder.

"Say, Jack," he inquired, when the other looked up absently, "you ain't got any smokin', have you?"

THE BUTTERFLY

By McLandburgh Wilson

We thought she was a butterfly,
  An empty headed fool
Who sought the gay frivolities
  When sterner aims should rule.

She craved the honey and the bloom
  And never sipped the gall;
The meaning of the tragedies
  She never knew at all.

But now her son is khaki clad—
  Of unimagined things,
How strange to think a butterfly
  Should give an eagle wings!

* * *

Their Strenuous Morning.

The class in "cold pack" canning has convened in the big lecture-room, and the demonstrator is endeavoring to make herself heard above the din of forty voices.

Demonstrator—"Now, ladies! If you will give me your attention——"

Lady in Brown (arising and beckoning wildly to newcomer at door)—"Oh, Ethel! Ethhhhhh-el! Right over here! I've saved a seat!"

Lady in Green—"I'm so glad to have the chance to learn this new method! I'm simply going to can everything! Why, you can even can potatoes—and Tom is so fond of pumpkin pie that I intend to can a whole dozen of the biggest pumpkins I can find—what's that? It only takes a cupful to make one pie? Well, with the war and all, there is no telling how high pumpkins will go, and I think it's our duty——"

Lady Named Ethel—"Apron? Of course I didn't bring an apron! I supposed it was a lecture I was coming to, and I must say that after just spending 50 cents for a manicure I'm not going to spoil my nails cutting up horrid old beets and beans and things! I'll just watch the rest of you! Did you know Mary White has twins? She——"

Demonstrator (a trifle more loudly)—"Ladies! Will you come to order! The cans must first be placed in boiling water, and then you clean your vegetables."

Lady in Blue—"My goodness! Does she expect us to scrub these awful things? Why, I supposed that she attended to that part of it! What's the use of our having a demonstrator and everything if she makes us do the work? I just expected to take notes——"

Lady in Plaid Gingham—"And I said to her, 'Irene, if it were my husband instead of yours I can tell you instantly what I would do!' Why, I wouldn't stand it for one single minute! I——"

Demonstrator—"Has every one got her can packed correctly? Hold them up so I can see!"

Wild Chorus—"Mercy, no! Why, I am working just as fast as I can!"

Lady in Green—"As fast as I push these beets in they push themselves out! What shall I do? Oh—must they have their tails and tops snipped off? And skinned? Blanch them? No, I didn't blanch them—I didn't hear you say a word about blanching beets—it was string beans you were talking about. Anyhow, I guess it was when I was hearing all about Edith White's elopement. What'll I do with them now, Mrs. Jones?"

Lady in Brown—"Oh, come here, quick! I've dropped my wrist watch into the boiling water! What'll I do, Mrs. Jones?"

Lady in Blue—"Won't somebody help me with these wax beans? The more I string them the more strings come! What'll I do now, Mrs. Jones?"

Lady Named Ethel—"Somebody's got to tell me from the very start what to do with this asparagus, because Mrs. Jones didn't make it at all clear. I don't think she's much of a demonstrator! I just turned to Louise to ask her how she cut that skirt of hers, and when I turned back she was all thru talking! I don't think she is a bit thoro! What do I do now, Mrs. Jones?"

Demonstrator (holding her brow)—"Ladies! I will now repeat my instructions, and I wish you would all listen closely, because the method is practically the same with all products, merely varying the time of cooking. Select your vegetable or fruit——"

Lady in Plaid Gingham—"You haven't? Why, they say he's left her and nobody knows where he is, and she hasn't a cent! Not a cent! I suppose the poor thing will have to take a position downtown! I never did like his eyes, sort of shifty——"

Lady in Brown—"I do wish I could remember whether it was today my mother-in-law was coming to lunch or tomorrow! We're to have a veal loaf, and she hates veal loaf, and she's no sensitive she'll think I did it on purpose! Oh, I've filled my can half with beans and the rest with beets! What'll I do now, Mrs. Jones?"

Lady in Blue—"My head aches. I don't see why she couldn't just tell us and let us take notes, while she did it! I don't see any sense in burning and cutting myself when it's not necessary! Oh, my can blew up when I put it in hot water, Mrs. Jones! What'll I do? The asparagus blew up, too! It simply can't be the right method—she's not telling us right, I know! Is it 11? Goodness, I've got to go this minute! Somebody else can pick up the asparagus!"

Demonstrator—"Did every one time her can when she put it on to cook, as I instructed the class?"

Wild Chorus—"My goodness, no! I forgot! How'll I know when to take it out, Mrs. Jones?"

Demonstrator (wearily)—"You won't! All the cans will be spoiled because there is no way now of telling how long they cook!"

Lady in Plaid Gingham (after a horrified silence by all)—"Well, we're just learning on these anyhow, and there are only forty cans, so it doesn't make much difference! Come on, let's go get lunch! I'm simply starved after working so hard! And we've learned such a lot!"

* * *

Other Chores.

"After a couple of years' absence from home I was playing in a city near by, and I invited my father to come over and see the show," relates Laurence Wheat, the actor.

"When the last curtain had rung down he came back on the stage to see me, and, while we were chatting the treasurer appeared at the door of my dressing-room and handed me my pay envelope. Dad saw the figures on the outside, and his eyes sparkled.

"'My boy,' he said, 'you don't tell me that you get that much every week, do you?'

"'That's right, dad,' I replied.

"'Well, well,' said the old gentleman, thoughtfully, 'is that so? What other chores have you to do besides actin'?'"

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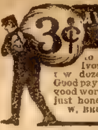

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CHAPTER IV.

JET.

PERRY ALLARD found no rifleman. He did find, however, the broad sweep of openings, with a starlit sky overhead, and an abundance of new courage coursing in his veins.

He located his position by the brightly shining North Star. He knew pretty nearly where he was. A southwest course would lead to the big lake, and to the little lumber town of Ironwood. He knew some people there, and felt safer in seeking that town than remaining in the settlements. He knew it must be several miles yet, and he was becoming weary with his struggle in the dark, thick woods.

He presumed that the rifle shot had been made by some settler firing at a deer, which abounded in great numbers along the openings adjoining the bi-pine woods.

"I'll go on a while," he decided, "till I come to a creek, when I'll sit down for another lunch and rest."

In the course of half an hour the boy came to a little depression in the level openings, thru which rippled a creek of a few feet in width.

On the bank of this Perry sat down, breathing a sigh of relief. He pulled out the fragments of his late luncheon, and soon devoured it, smacking his lips at the last with a deep relish. Feeling tired, the boy lay down under an oak bush and fell asleep, nor did he wake till the sun of a new day peeped above the plain.

"Gosh all hemlock!" exclaimed Perry, sitting up, rubbing his eyes.

He saw no sign of road as he glanced about, but off to the left the sight of a coil of smoke greeted his sight. "A settler's shanty, by gum!" ejaculated the boy. He sprang to his feet, shook himself as a Newfoundland dog might, then began walking toward the spot above which poured a dark coil of smoke.

In a little time the boy heard a shout of gay laughter—a girl's laugh that sounded very sweet to his ears. Pushing on, he soon came to a clearing in which was built a large log house, with attendant outbuildings, as tho the inmates kept horses, perhaps cows and other stock. An openings farmer, thought Perry, with deep pleasure.

As he approached he noticed a low shed behind the house, one side open to the weather, and about the sides of which were heaps of pine bolts which he knew at a glance were calculated for manufacture into shingles. In fact, several bunches neatly bound of the latter convinced him of his correct interpretation of the scene.

"Hello!"

A girl came around the corner of the house and confronted the boy. A more piquant, mischievous face Perry never saw till now. She seemed about 12 years old. She wore a short dark skirt, the whole bound about by a big blue apron.

"Well, a girl, I do believe!" exclaimed the surprised and pleased Perry.

"And you are a very tired-looking boy," agreed the girl.

"I am tired," admitted he.

"Have you had breakfast?"

"No."

"Come in, then, and Auntie Dame'll give you some bread and butter."

"Who is Auntie Dame?"

"My aunt, of course. What did you suppose?" and the girl's laughter at once reassured our boy runaway.

"Tell me your name, Miss——"

"Oh, I'm only Jet," smiled the girl.

"Dimples would be better," said Perry. "You may call me Job, because that isn't my name."

"Oh, isn't it, now?"

"You'll call me that, won't you, Jet?" he pleaded.

The girl's face was suddenly overcast with shadows. The laugh on her lips gave place to a sober pucker, the hazel soft eyes going dark with shadows.

"You look pale and sick," finally ventured she. "While I don't think Hardluck shanty is a good place for strangers, yet I reckon my aunt will take you in and give you a bite to eat. Then you'll go on to Ironwood, won't you?"

"Do you want me to go?"

"Why, of course—after you eat and are rested."

"All right, I'll do as you say."

Perry went into the house with the girl. The floor of the living-room was as neat as wax. The woman who greeted him, at Jet's introduction, was tall and angular, with a very severe cast of features. The boy wondered where the little one came by her pleasant smile and engaging manners—surely not from this soured, oldish woman.

"So you are tired and want something to eat, eh?" said the woman, penetrating the boy visitor with a keen, long-drawn glance from her beady black eyes.

"If it's not too much trouble, marm."

"Of course it's a trouble——"

"Wait, auntie," cried the girl Jet. "Let me get the stuff. I know what young folks like to eat better'n you do."

"Very good, Miss Jet, but don't make a muss all over the table, and," scanning the boy's boots, "don't scuff mud on my clean floor." Of this there was no danger, since our boy traveler had carefully cleaned his boots on the grass outside, before entering.

It was a nice little lunch that the girl set before him, so that Perry was very much refreshed when he had finished.

"Now, then, what can I do to pay for my breakfast?" cried slender Perry Allard as he moved back from the pine table.

"You might split some wood," suggested the woman.

Jet laughed glowingly. "That's my work when Unk Nick's away," she said.

"Good," cried the boy, swinging lightly across the floor, as Jet caught his arm. The woman called angrily after her niece, who at once turned to obey.

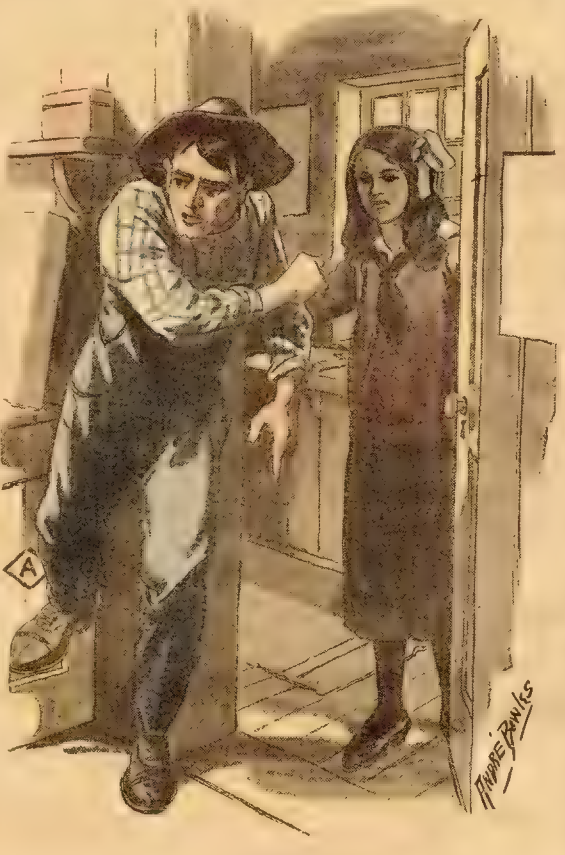
"Do let the fellow find his own ax and woodpile," snapped the woman. "You are forever making me ashamed of your tomboyishness."

Perry glanced at Jet with curiosity. He could not see anything but a nice, chummy girl, the growl of disapproval of the gaunt aunt to the contrary notwithstanding.

Our boy found the woodpile and the ax. Most of the wood was gnarled white oak chunks and bits of jack pine, tough and discouraging to work upon. The lad went at the work with a will, however, and soon got up a fine perspiration.

Before he had finished, Jet came out and sat on the round of a sawhorse near, watching his efforts with an amused smile. Perry liked this new addition to his family of friends; he had so few of them that this little girl was worth cultivating.

"There, the pile is finished," and Perry put down his ax with a relieved sigh.



"Quick!"

"A good round price to pay for a simple cold breakfast," remarked the girl.

"It wasn't any too much; and the breakfast was good."

"I'm glad you liked it."

Perry drew near, leaning against one corner of the shingle shed.

"I am looking for a job," he said.

"Did you run away from somewhere?"

The hazel eyes of the girl sought his face with unaffected interest.

"Well, yes, if you must know, Miss Mischief. Now what do you think of that? Ready to scold and cast me off, of course. I think I'll go on to Ironwood and not make you more trouble. Where is your daddy?"

"I haven't a daddy," cried the girl, in sudden seriousness. "Just Aunt Dame and Unky Nick. They're good to me, so I have to be satisfied."

"But this is a lonesome place. Do you go to school, Miss Dame?"

"I do, but my name's not Dame, but Norstuff—not so pretty, is it?"

"Norstuff," echoed the boy. He had heard the name once upon a time, and if he remembered rightly it was in connection with some questionable transaction. He kept his own counsel, however, regarding this, saying gently: "The name is all right, of course. Where is your Uncle Nick at the present moment?"

"He went off last evening—to Ironwood, I reckon. He has all kinds of business thru the country. My uncle is an important man. He makes money, too. I wish you could see him, Job."

"He is a shingle weaver?"

"Yes, and something else besides."

"What else?"

"Oh, a lot of things——"

"You, Jet, come here this minute!"

The voice of Mrs. Norstuff called sharply from the house. Jet got up slowly. Perry regarded her admiringly.

"I hope," he said, "she won't scold you for talking with me."

"Let her," with a compression of the lips and a flash of the eye. "I won't take a back seat if she undertakes to whip me. I haven't done anything, have I?"

"Surely not. I'll go tell her——"

"No, you musn't." She warned him with a look. "I'll get along with Auntie Dame all right."

The girl went at her aunt's bidding, while Perry, feeling considerably freshened, walked under the roof of the shingle shed. He saw a pile of spalts not yet turned into the finished shingle, so he sat down at the house, picked up the drawing knife that hung in a leather socket under the frame, and proceeded to fit the rough board for smoothing.

Perry had worked at this at odd times, and was enabled to turn out some very passable looking shingles. The door of the dwelling had been slammed the moment Mrs. Norstuff had drawn her little niece across the threshold.

Perry could hear a loud, angry voice discoursing discipline to the girl. It seemed that she had been indiscreet in talking as she had to a stranger within the gates. What there was to keep covered puzzled the boy. Surely a humble shingle weaver ought not to be ashamed of his calling.

The boy worked on for some time, clearly happy in having found something to which he could lay his hand.

"By George!" he finally ejaculated, squinting along one edge of his sixth shingle, "I believe I would make a first-class shingle weaver."

"No doubt you would, my boy!"

Perry jumped to his feet as a keen, penetrating, rather hoarse voice rumbled across the front opening to the shanty.

"Well, well!" he began.

"It's all right. Go ahead. I need another hand," and then a man strode into the inclosure and confronted Runaway Perry Allard.

CHAPTER V.

STEDGER COMES.

THE man who confronted the boy runaway was slightly above the medium height, thickset, with full face, a week-old stubble of sandy color on his jaws and chin, a pair of small black eyes set wide beneath heavy red brows. He held out his hand to the lad, saying:

"I need another hand. Will you stay and help me?"

"I'd like to," said Perry, in rather a timid voice.

"All right, it's stay, then, for you. I see you can make shingles. That's one thing you'll have to do; mebbe drive the hoss to the woods for bolts. Ever drive a team, lad?"

Perry assured the man that he had

"Good enough. Runaway?"

"I came away on my own hook."

"Without asking leave of the dad or mam?"

"I have neither father nor mother, sir."

"Better still," with a raucous intonation, his grin showing a set of magnificent white molars. "I shan't have anybody whining after you. I've [illegible] wanting to adopt a boy. Your [illegible] is——"

"You may call me Job, sir."

"Because it isn't your name, [illegible]" grinning.

"It is what I choose to be called," declared Perry, resolutely.

"Job it is then. You are Job Norstuff after today. I adopt you as my own, and you are to do all that I tell you. That's a bargain ain't it, Job?"

"For the present it is."

"All right."

And that is how Perry Allard became Job Norstuff, the shingle weaver's son. He remained a month before he realized that he was beginning to like the work set him to do. When not shaving shingles he engaged in driving the raw-boned gray mare to the woods after pine bolts, a distance of several miles. This latter work was enjoyable, since Jet accompanied him on several of his trips. She proved to be a bright, witty little girl, without a single characteristic in common with her uncle and aunt.

"Jet seems like folks," Perry remarked once to fat Duke Sayles, who sometimes helped him with his work. Duke was as fat as butter, as roly-poly as a veritable baby elephant, and our boy liked him.

"Like your own folks, eh, Job?" chuckled Sayles.

"Like my sister would have been if I'd had one, Duke."

"Ah, I see. It's nice to have a sister," [illegible] Sayles, whose baby-blue eyes fairly emitted good nature. "My sister died when she was a babe. I was the only one left, and I grew up a big hulk of a boy. Dad went to the West Indies on a trader and never came back; mam died of a broken heart, so I was left to roam the world alone."

"Then you, too, are an orphan?"

"That's what I am, Job."

Big Duke sat on a log and fanned himself with his hat. He regarded his companion keenly from half-closed lids.

"Say, kid, I want to ask you something," suddenly announced the fat boy.

"Of course you may."

"How old are you?"

"If I have my age right I am slightly past 16."

"You look small for that age. I'm 18 and I am as big as three like you. Did you know the Stedges of Six Corners?"

"What?"

Perry nearly fell off the bolt pile on which he was standing. While Duke did not get the name exactly right, there could be no doubt concerning the family he meant. This was the first time the runaway's uncle-in-law had been mentioned since he came to the shingle shanty nearly a month ago.

"I asked if you ever heard of the Stedges?" again spoke the fat boy. "The old man Stedges is a hardened old sinner they tell me, and they say he drove away or murdered his nephew, a sickly little fellow named Perry Allard. Since reading about that, I've wondered if the boy did really steal the horse."

All the time he was talking the blue eyes of fat Duke peered out from shaded biscuit lids at the face of his slender companion.

Perry was annoyed and uneasy. He had begun to feel himself perfectly safe, till this questioning young mastodon stirred up olden memories.

"What about a stolen horse?" finally stammered Perry.

"Oh, it was in the paper at the time. Didn't you see it?"

"No. I haven't seen the town paper since I came here."

"That accounts for it, then," gutturaled fat Duke. "The Ironwood News was full of it at the time. I saw it when I was into town with a load of shingles last month. I was wondering if you knew the boy thief."

"Why should I know him?"

"I though mebbe you might, seeing as you came here a stranger about the time the hoss was stolen. Coincidence, some might call it, eh?" laughing. "I had a notion to try for that reward."

"Was—was there a reward?"

"Oh, yes. Old Stedges——"

"You mean Stedger, don't you?"

"Oh, mebbe I do. So you know the name all right I see," chuckled fat Duke. "Mebbe you knew the boy, too?"

Perry worked in silence. The wagon was soon loaded. Perry climbed on, took up the reins and called to Duke to mount the load if he would ride.

"I think I'll walk a ways to reduce my flesh," he laughed, throwing a handspike over his shoulder, marching down the road in front. For a mile this continued; then the big boy clambered over the rear of the load and drew his immense bulk up beside the small driver.

"Gracious," puffing, "but that winds me all right!"

"You ought to quit eating, Duke," suggested Perry.

"My gracious!" ejaculated Fatty. "What'd life be worth without the eats? I'm troubled enough even with all I do get, let alone starving myself. Say, Job."

"What now, Duke?"

"What do you suppose became of that poor little chap up at Six Corners? I feel sorry every time I think of him. That big Jim Stedger was mean as dirt, I've no doubt, and I ain't blaming the little cuss for running away. Seems kinder queer, tho, that he'd steal a horse. That's the worst part of it. My, if he is caught they'll send him to prison sure as your born."

Perry was beginning to feel uneasy.

As to stealing a horse, that had been farthest from his thoughts when he mounted old Pete to make good his escape from the clutches of a miserly old tyrant. Had not the tavern keeper agreed to see that Mr. Stedger got his horse again? Why had he allowed him, Perry, to rest under suspicion?

"Duke," said Perry, in a low voice, "I did hear about the boy who quit drudging for old Zadok Stedger, but not that a horse was stolen. Have you seen anything more in the paper about that? You said there was a reward offered for the horse?"

"Yes, fifty dollars for the arrest and conviction of the thief, Perry Allard."

"But that was most a month ago?"

"It was."

"Since that has the paper said anything about the boy? Maybe Stedger got his horse back again?"

"I haven't seen a paper lately."

"And you have heard nothing further?"

"Not a thing."

The small questioner heaved a sigh of relief. Duke Sayles' blue eyes were minute interrogation points as they regarded his companion from between nearly closed lids. He did not, however, continue the conversation on that line.

Nick Norstuff was away from home much of the time, leaving the fat youth as manager about the premises.

"Mr. Norstuff stays down to Ironwood most all the time, doesn't he?" asked Perry, who was quite willing to change the subject.

"Oh, he isn't there all the time he's away from home," returned Sayles.

"Where does he keep himself then?"

"In a lot of places. You see, our boss is a string butcher. He supplies meat to a number of different towns within a range of twenty miles."

"I wondered if he made a living at shingle weaving."

"Oh, no, that's the least of his work," laughed Sayles. "I sometimes think he's got a heap more irons in the fire than he can take care of."

When they reached home Jet met them at the stable.

"There was a man here today looking for some one," said the girl.

Perry slid off the pile of bolts, walked around and stood before the girl.

"Did you speak to me, Jet?" he asked.

"Maybe it was you he wanted," returned the girl. "He talked with Auntie Dame, and about a boy. Seem's tho she called his name Perry.

"You are sure it wasn't Job?" put in Fatty, at this point, winking at his companion.

"Don't be smart, Fatness," tossing her head. "I wasn't talking to you, anyhow, Mr. Sayles."

"No, I reckon you wan't, little Jet Black," roared the fat youth. "Well, what did the old Dame tell him?"

"Of course we haven't seen any boy named Perry, have we, Job?"

Our hero shook his head. He hurried to unhitch and place the horse in his stall. It was near the dinner hour, and Perry went under the summer leanto where soap and water were to be had in abundance. While the boy was washing, Jet crept in, standing so close that her dark curls tickled his thin cheek.

"I didn't like the man at all, Job," she whispered, "and he hasn't been gone long. He said he'd call again. D'ye think it's safe for you here?"

"Why—why," stammered the thin lad, "what do you mean, Jet?"

"I mean you might be the boy old Zadok Stedger is hunting for," answered the girl, with blunt decision, her frank hazel eyes reading his face closely.

"Zadok Stedger!"

"That was his name," breathed Miss Norstuff. "He has lost his nephew, Perry Allard, and he was looking into every house along Black Creek. He was told that a stranger lad was here with us, that's why he was so in earnest. Now what shall we do, ah—Per—Job?"

Our boy hero was stunned. So his uncle-in-law had at last succeeded in tracking him to this out-of-the way shingle shanty on the oak openings. It must be that he wanted to compel his return, and no doubt the law would play into the tyrant's hands. He wouldn't go back, Perry resolved. He would rather live in the woods on berries and barks, hiding under old roots than again come under the influence of this wicked old miser of Allard farm.

Even as this resolution filled his soul, the sound of a well-known voice fell on the boy's ear. Glancing thru a crack, Perry saw a dried-up old man coming toward the house in company with Duke Sayles, the fat boy.

CHAPTER VI.

A FRIEND IN NEED

"YOU will find your nephew here, sir," Fatty was saying, as he advanced toward the house in company with Mr. Zadok Stedger. He raised his voice, Perry thought, purposely to give him warning.

An instant the fugitive boy stood debating, whether to meet the old farmer and defy him, or to sneak out of sight till he had gone his way. Jet evidently understood what was going on in the boy's mind. She turned and stood at his side while the two men entered the front of the house.

"You are Perry Allard?" she questioned.

"What if I am?" he demanded boldly.

"You stole your uncle's horse and ran away. How much did you sell the animal for, Job?"

"I didn't sell him," indignantly denied Perry. "I'll tell you all about it sometime, only don't expose me now, Jet."

"You are sure you didn't steal the horse, boy?"

"Sure as that you live, Jet."

"All right then. Come with me."

The girl walked to one corner of the back shed, pulled aside a slab that stood against the wall, revealing a small door. "Quick!" she ejaculated, as voices were heard in the next room, one plainly being that of Perry's uncle. The girl pulled open the door, thrust her boy companion thru, closing it after him. She then replaced the wide pine slab and turned to face the house door, which swung open to the touch of Mrs. Norstuff. Right at her shoulder plodded the grizzled old farmer.

"Jet, where is he?"

Mrs. Norstuff swedged her voice sharply at Jet, who stood her ground without winking.

"What is it, Auntie Dame?" sweetly queried the girl.

"That boy Job."

"Yes, auntie, what about Job?"

"I want him. He came in to dinner just a few minutes ago. Where is he now? Tell me, child, and at once."

The beady flash in the eyes of the speaker did not seem to alarm her petite niece, who stood with folded arms smiling into her face

"Why do you ask me about Job, Aunt Dame?" demanded the girl. "I have all I can do to keep track of myself and Jibbet here," bending to caress a Scotch terrier that just then bounded under the shed, fawning at the girl's feet. The dog was one that Job had picked up running wild in the woods—a lost canine anxious to be adopted. The boy had fetched it home and given it into the care of Miss Jet, who adored pets.

"Pah! The nasty dog!" snarled the woman angrily.

"Nice Jibbet, nice doggie," softly intoned the girl, paying strict attention to the terrier, much to the wrath of the weaver's wife.

"See here, Jet, listen to me," cried Mrs. Norstuff angrily. "I want to see Job. He's a bad, evil critter. He's deceived your uncle and me shamefully. Now tell us where he is at once."

"How should I know?" quietly queried the girl.

"Don't you know?"

"Honestly, Aunt Dame, I don't," declared Jet, with the utmost gravity. She calmed her conscience with the mental reservation that she was telling the truth, since, after seeing the boy pass out of her sight behind that narrow door she had no means of knowing where he was, altho she might have been able to guess pretty nearly

"He came in here to wash for dinner."

"I imagine he did, auntie."

"Then where can he have gone?"

"Like enough back to the barn," suggested Jet.

"My good girl," spoke Mr. Stedger, whose wrinkled jowls showed behind the tallow neck of the shantyman's wife, "it is highly important that we locate this boy, who has broken the laws of the State and is liable to arrest for felony. If perchance you know aught of him, be good enough to give us his whereabouts."

The hazel eyes of Jet fixed themselves on the rugged countenance of the speaker. The jarring harshness of his voice grated on her sensibilities, and she set the man down as one of low nature and selfish desires. No wonder the pale lad who had come to them so strangely was in deadly fear of this person

"Yes," interjected Mrs. Norstuff, "the boy calling himself Job has sadly deceived us. His name is not Job, but Perry Allard, who stole his uncle's horse, rode away to town, sold the animal and fled. We have been entertaining a wicked deceiver in the person of this boy. I hope he gets what's coming to him, that I do. If Nick were only here there'd be something doing."

"And there will, anyhow, if I can once lay my hands on my incorrigible nephew."

"What a terrible boy!" agreed Jet.

"Will you help us find him?"

"I'll go right now and hunt him up," cried Jet, calling to her dog. The two raced from the shed toward the barn. Before arriving here she encountered fat Mr. Sayles.

"Whither so fast, Miss Jet Black?" queried his fatness, with an unseemly giggle that shook his rotund sides.

"I'm going to get fifty dollars for finding Perry Allard," declared Jet, with a flourish of her slim arms

"And would you sell your boy chum for that paltry sum?"

"Fatty, what do you take me for? Hush a bit, and come with me."

The girl pulled Sayles along after her into the shelter of the stable

"Now, Jet, what's up? You have——"

"I have too much liking for a decent boy to betray him into the clutches of a scamp like old Zadok Stedger yonder," declared Jet, with compressed lip and flashing eye. "You'll help me, won't you, Duke?"

"Eh? What you gettin' at miss——"

"Helping Job keep out of the clutches of that ugly Mr. Stedger."

"Wal, now, that's asking a good deal," said Fatty, in an undertone. "It's the feller in the barn?"

"Never mind," broke in Jet, disgustedly. "I see you have turned against Job. Do you know, he told me all about himself one day, and I think he is a good boy, badly treated. I mean to help him all I can."

"Whew!"

The girl turned her back on Sayles, who chuckled as he leaned his immense bulk against the jamb of the door leading to the stables.

"I want to say right now, Jet Black," he went on, "you're the queerest mortal I ever saw. One minute you are going to win a reward by betraying this poor little chap into the hands of his enemies; the next you are ready to fight to shield him to the last gasp. Now what am I to think of that, miss?"

"I was talking for the folks at the house the first time, Duke. We are alone now, and I thought——"

"You thought what, Miss Jet?"

"That you'd help me save poor pestered Job."

"You mean wicked, thieving Perry, don't you, Jet?"

"I mean what I say. You're pesky mean, Fatty, that's what you are!" cried the girl, with clinched hands and uptilted chin. "I don't like you any more, so there. Of course we all knew that Job wasn't his true name, but he had a good reason to change it, and now——"

"Yes, and now?"

"And now we shall lose him anyhow."

"How do you mean?"

"He can't of course stop with Uncle Nick and Aunt Dame after this. I am so sorry. What shall we do now?"

"Nothing that I know of. I can find the boy a good place at Ironwood, where he'll be safe enough, and'll earn more wages than here; besides, he can have his dearest wish gratified there."

"What wish is that?"

"Perry wants to become an athlete," explained the fat youth. "He and I have wrestled a lot. I've given him lessons in boxing so that he's quite scienced with his dukes; but there's one in Ironwood who's far ahead of me, and I want the boy to take lessons of him, you understand, after which he can call on Jim Stedger and get even for some things in the past."

Jet smiled despite the gloom of the situation. The idea of slim little Job, or Perry Allard as he really was, becoming an athlete seemed remote indeed. Fatty came close to the little girl and talked in a low voice; fully agreeing that it was the proper thing to keep the pursued boy out of the hands of his avaricious uncle.

These two laid their plans while Mrs Norstuff and Zadok Stedger fumed and fretted, still searching for the strangely missing young teamster

Meantime our hero was experiencing the time of his life, and making discoveries not contemplated by Miss Jet Norstuff when she introduced him into the little apartment behind the concealed door of the summer kitchen.

The boy found himself in what seemed a narrow closet in which some men's wearing apparel hung against the wall. A handy closet or storeroom, the lad decided. He scratched a match and glanced about. He saw nothing to excite his curiosity. As the flame of the match died out, voices beyond the covered door fell upon his ear.

Much of the talk indulged in by those outside referring to his strange disappearance he overheard. They were discussing him, and old Zadok Stedger was not mincing terms when he referred to his runaway nephew.

Perry could not quite understand

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about the horse. Why should his uncle wish to brand his relative-by-marriage with the mark of a thief, if, as seemed to be the case, the old miser cared only for the boy because of the value of his services on the farm. That sort of work was coming on rapidly now, and men were scarce and high-priced

"I shan't go back unless he gets me on a warrant," mentally avowed the fugitive lad.

The murmur of voices died away as the speakers passed into the open air. Perry stood debating for several minutes. At length he decided to explore the closet more thoroly. He moved carefully along the wall, feeling his way with both hands.

Presently a thrill shot thru him, as he felt a sudden giving of the floor beneath his feet. The wall was smooth and he had no hold on the sides. His fingers fairly dug into the soft pine as he shot like an arrow from a bow downward into a black vault beneath the closet floor!

This remarkable story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. You will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Far Cheaper.

Two poorly clad women were proceeding homeward after the exhilarating gaveties of the mothers' meeting, and naturally they discussed domestic economy.

"Dae ye ken," said Mrs. Brown. "I'm due $5 for gas this month, and I dinna ken how I'll get it paid."

"Why not be like me," said Mrs. Green "and use the nickel in the slot meter?"

"But they say it's the dearest in the end. Ye get less gas for your nickel, ye ken, than I get for mine."

"Aye, but ye see, it's just this way wi me—I never put in nae mair than a nickel at a time, and ye see, a lot o' folk comes tae my house at night, and whenever the gas begins to go down I just let on I hinna got a nickel! An' there is aye somebody to stump one up. Oh, yes, it's far cheaper in the end."

* * *

The Announcement.

In the center of a large agricultural district a candidate for parliamentary honors experienced some difficulty in securing a suitable room for a public meeting. However, a farmer came to the rescue by offering his barn, announcing at the same time that he would act as chairman.

When the moment arrived the farmer rose to his feet and, thumping the table with a formidable-looking stick, opened the meeting in the following business-like fashion:

"Friends, enemies, an' other folks, I ain't much of a speaker, but—with a thump of the stick—what I say I generally say to the point. This is a public meeting on private property, mind, and if anybody feels he has anything against our man he had better find a safer place to say it than in my barn. Now, mister," to the candidate, "wire in."

The candidate proceeded to "wire in" and there were no unseemly interruptions at that meeting.

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The GINGER JAR

Strenuous Animals

THE IMPORTED GRIZZLY

[Copyright, Frederick A. Stokes.]

"TOM WILSON'S imported grizzly created havoc among Pike County animals during his short yet strenuous career," said Deacon Todgers, pensively. "But in the end he fell a victim to the intelligence and scientific knowledge of the dean of the local black bears. And when Tom Wilson came to look for the remains of his pet he found that nothing but a patient search over this and the surrounding counties could collect enough for a decent burial.

"Tom captured the grizzly out West when it was a cub and had trained it to hunt for him. When the bear was nearly full grown he brought him East and turned him loose on the innocent bears and wildcats of this county. The grizzly had been trained so that he wouldn't eat anything but cooked meat. While active, he wasn't an especially intelligent bear, and, not being able to cook his own food, he would turn the proceeds of his hunting expeditions in to Tom Wilson. Tom would deduct a liberal share for the benefit of the person he described as 'honest Tom Wilson.' The rest he cooked and gave to the grizzly. Of course, Tom got all the furs, and the game was as good as a gold mine to him. I remonstrated with him on the wickedness of it.

"'Your bear comes here a stranger from the West,' I told Tom. 'The first time he wanders out in the woods the local black bears give him the glad hand, and try to be hospitable and make him feel at home. And how does he repay them for their kindness? By outraging their tenderest feelings and converting happy, peaceable bears into furry corpses. You're teaching him to be a cannibal bear. No good will come of money earned that way.'

"Tom only grunted that the furs seemed to sell for as much as if they were those of bears who had voluntarily committed suicide. So he let his grizzly continue his career of devastation unreproved.

"There's no denying the grizzly was a wonder when it came to hunting other animals. He was a big Silvertip, and, despite their many admirable qualities, not a black bear in Pike County could stand up to him in a fight. In a little while game got so scarce that some of the boys proposed shooting the grizzly. But the bear was the rightful property of Tom Wilson, and I warned them not to do anything illegal.

"'Man and boy,' I told them, 'I've known Pike County bears for years. And I've got confidence in their ability to take care of themselves. This grizzly bear game is a new one to them now, but as soon as they get a little used to it, they'll make this furry intruder wish he had remained in the far West.' And subsequent developments showed the truth of my prophecy.

"The next day, while I was walking thru the woods, I heard something come tearing thru the underbrush. Not wishing to imperil a valuable life, I hustled to one side and awaited developments. In a minute a black bear broke thru. After him came Tom Wilson's grizzly. The grizzly was the faster sprinter, and a moment more a funeral would have been all that was coming to the black bear. But just in time he struck a tree big enough to bear his weight. Up it he scrambled. The grizzly couldn't climb, so he stayed at the foot and growled.

"As soon as I took a good look at the black bear I recognized him. He was the oldest and most respected bear in the county, a bear who had lived there all his life, and whom no one but that impudent Western grizzly would have thought of harming. And it was plain that, while he felt a little frightened, the main emotion of that venerable bear was anger and a sense of outraged dignity. He, a bear who had withstood the wiles of Pike County hunters for years, to be ignominiously chased and treed in this manner by a strange bear nearly twice his size, but without one-half his intelligence! While at present the old black bear was principally occupied with keeping out of the way of the grizzly, I felt certain he would have ample revenge in the end

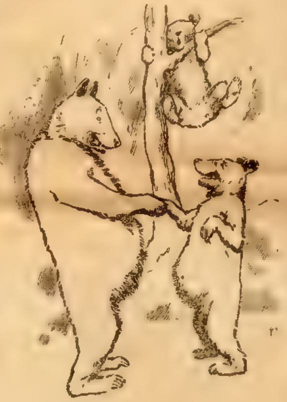
"'Unless I am mistaken in the character of that venerable bear,' I said to myself, 'swift bumps and painful experiences will teach Mr. Grizzly to regret he meddled with him.'

"That afternoon I went out into the lot back of my house to blow up some stumps with nitroglycerin. I had the glycerin in a can, and, as I had use for it, would pour out a little into a small pan. I had been at work only a few minutes when I looked up, and there was that same black bear watching me with an expression of the most intent interest. He had evidently stayed up in the tree until the grizzly had grown tired, and then had come down with revenge in his heart. I knew that kindly old black bear wouldn't harm me, so I went on blowing up stumps without paying any particular attention to him.

"Pretty soon the bear wandered over to the can of nitroglycerin. He sniffed at it. Then he took a taste. Nitroglycerin has a sort of sweet taste, but I was surprised at the look of joy which spread over that bear's intelligent countenance.

"'You had better leave that stuff alone,' I warned him. 'Nitroglycerin isn't the proper health food for black bears. If you should swallow some of it and then happen to stumble or jar yourself, your honorable career would be brought to a sudden and expansive finish.'

"Maybe that worthy old bear didn't understand every word I said, but he certainly gathered in my meaning. His heart was set on having that nitroglycerin, however, even if he didn't intend to use it himself. But he was a moral bear, a bear of good principles, and he felt it wouldn't be right to take my glycerin without giving me something in return. He gave one more longing look at the explosive and then piked off to the woods as fast as he could go.



The glad hand.

"At first I was considerably puzzled to account for the actions of that black bear. He certainly knew too much to eat the nitroglycerin, and I couldn't think of any use that even an animal of his wisdom could put it to. Then I remembered the looks of hatred he had cast at that grizzly when up the tree.

"'He's preparing some kind of a surprise party for that grizzly,' I thought, 'and by the time Mr. Grizzly recovers from the surprise there won't be enough left of him for an inquest.'

"About half an hour later the black bear returned, carrying in his mouth the biggest and fattest coon I had seen for months. He laid the coon down by the can of nitroglycerin. Then he looked at me in an inquiring manner. I saw what he meant.

"'It's a fair exchange,' I said. 'Leave the coon, take the glycerin, and try and make life interesting for that big grizzly.'

"I was mighty curious to know what plan that good old bear had in his head, so I followed him. He carried the can of nitroglycerin to one of the paths frequented by the grizzly in his excursions for the purpose of teaching Pike County animals the strenuous life. Every little while the black bear would stop and chuckle to himself at the thought of the surprise he was preparing for his enemy. But he was mighty careful to put down the can of nitroglycerin on these occasions, for he was a wise bear and appreciated that gleeful chuckles and nitroglycerin don't go well together. When he reached the path used by the grizzly he carefully opened up the can and left it standing in the middle of the path. Then he went quite a distance down the path to where there was a sharp curve. Just around the curve the black bear rolled a good-sized rock, so that it stood directly in the path. A person or animal running swiftly down the path and not knowing the rock was there would be certain to smash into it and get considerable of a jar. Having laid his trap, the black bear hurried back and hid himself about halfway between the rock and the place where he had placed the can of nitroglycerin.

"Along towards evening the grizzly came hulking down the path. He saw the nitroglycerin, smelled of it, and then tasted it. Grizzlies have quite a sweet tooth, and, after having once tasted the stuff, that big bear couldn't rest until he had eaten every mouthful. When he finished he was a perfect example of an explosive bear.

"'If anything jars your feelings or stomach, my furry friend,' I remarked, but in low tones, 'you'll enter the bear happy hunting grounds in detachments.'

"As soon as the big grizzly had eaten the explosive, the black bear made his appearance down the path and began to send out challenging growls. The grizzly looked up, and for a moment seemed stunned at the impudence of the smaller bear in growling at him. But the black bear didn't seem frightened. Instead, he stayed in the path and made insulting remarks in the bear language, and if he hadn't been such a venerable and respectable bear, one would have said he was making faces at the grizzly. The grizzly didn't lose any time, but started down the path with the evident intention of giving the black bear a life lesson on the evils of insulting bigger bears.

"As soon as he saw the grizzly was fairly under way, the black bear turned and scampered down the path as fast as his short legs could carry him. The grizzly was gaining on him, but I noticed the black bear had allowed himself sufficient start so that there would be a good interval between them when Mr. Grizzly reached the rock. When he rounded the curve the black bear dodged into the bushes at one side. The grizzly was going too fast to turn, and of course he never suspected there was a big rock in the middle of his well-worn path, and he smashed into it at full speed.

"For about a minute there was a steady rain of grizzly. When it stopped the black bear emerged from the bushes. He had been considerably jarred himself by the explosion of the loaded grizzly. But he didn't mind that and was on hand with a bear gloat that it did a person's heart good to see. He fairly danced about the place where his enemy had last been seen. I never saw a look of more perfect content on the face of any one, man or bear.

"'Grizzly bears are all right in their uncultured way,' that good bear seemed to be saying to himself. 'But when they run against nitroglycerin and the intelligence of Pike County bears, an explosion is the only funeral sermon coming to them.'

"Tom Wilson was considerably worried when his pet hunter didn't return home that night. The next day he started out to find him. He followed the grizzly's trail to where the explosion had occurred. Then he couldn't understand what had happened.

"'I've heard of explosive tempers,' he said, puzzled-like, 'and my pet certainly had one. But this is the first time I ever heard of one tearing a hole in the ground.'

"I explained what had happened. Tom could hardly restrain his grief at the thought of his grizzly's fate.

"'His life was one long career of victory,' said Tom with tears in his eyes, 'but even a grizzly can't stand a diet of nitroglycerin and hard knocks. I would inter him with honors if I could. But I would have to celebrate his obsequies over the biggest part of this county. And I'm not willing to conduct continuous performance funerals, even for the sake of my cherished pet.'"

Next week's Ledger will contain another of this series of funny animal stories, entitled, "The Balloonist Dog." The series will run thru eight issues of the Ledger. Don't miss any of them. Each one will be "a scream."

* * *

Down on the Farm.

BY EARL H. EMMONS

The Cucumber.

THE cucumber, that foremost promoter of the cramp and colic activities of the world, is a foreigner which immigrated to America from India and it brought, besides its innocent appearance, a collection of warts and several Hindoo curses along with it.

Altho a lowly and humble plant, the cucumber is not to be lightly trifled with, and any one who thinks it is will eventually get a surprise and also a doctor in somewhat of a hurry.

As a producer of indigestion the cucumber has few equals, and this is about the only accomplishment it has. It came into notice several thousands of years ago, and since that time has been cultivated and introduced into all parts of the world, altho the reason for its popularity has been mysteriously lost or mislaid, so that now no one knows why it was done.

If the ancients were half as bright as history declares they were, one would think they would have discovered the possibilities in the cucumber, and, by nipping it in the bud, spared the future generations; but this was not done, and so the cucumber was allowed to grow and thrive and flourish, to spread its vines, together with its worms and its concealed cramps, all over the universe.

History tells us that the cucumber has been in use since the days of Moses, and in all probability Mose was in the act of regretting his indulgence in this edible when he became so peeved and staged his celebrated tablet-breaking performance.

One thing in favor of the cucumber is that it is easy to bring up. It requires very little care, and when it gets started there is nothing to bother it. There are a few unbeautiful worms who hang around the cucumber, and a large number of beetles chew its leaves up quite profusely, but none of the garden pests makes the slightest attempt to attack the pickle itself. They are only poor ignorant bugs and worms, but they know better than to eat the cucumber.

Having had its inception so long ago it would be natural to suppose the cucumber had played some part in the making of the world, but it is not mentioned prominently in either ancient or modern history. Yet those who know it best are convinced that the cucumber did its part in the world's making, even if it was left out of the publicity notices. For one thing, it has helped greatly to keep down the surplus population.

Altho it has a family tree of astonishing proportions, and four thousand years' worth of ancestors, the cucumber never was admitted into society, nor did it amount to much until it was discovered by Mr. Heinz, after which he got busy and discovered fifty-six additional varieties of similar nightmare producers, and thus the cucumber was placed on the high road to popularity, which was about the same time that the undertaking profession received such an impetus.

Now that the cucumber has been placed on a substantial and paying basis, it is understood Mr. Heinz is trying to cross it with a corn-razor, so that as the cucumber grows the razor will shave the carbuncles from its features, and thereby improve the personal appearance of the cucumber to a great extent.

Look out next week for another funny "Down on the Farm" sketch. It will be about "The Crab Apple." These sketches will run thru a number of issues of the Ledger, and are the most comic things yet written about things on the farm.

FREE
CATARRH
TREATMENT

My Offer of July 28th and Aug. 4th in Boyce's Weeklies Brings So Much Joy

In the July 28th issue of Boyce's Weeklies I made the following offer: that I would give Catarrh Treatments absolutely free of charge to be distributed among the readers of Boyce's Weeklies. That offer has been received with so much satisfaction, so many grateful letters have come to me from it, that my heart is filled with joy.

Therefore, I have decided to repeat the offer and am making this announcement. *I will give away absolutely free of charge, 250 more Catarrh treatments.* My method of treatment I believe to be one of the best that was ever formulated for Catarrh and allied ailments. The method has cured hundreds of suffering ones, after everything else has failed. Now, Reader, this is your chance. *ALL YOU* have got to do is to write for this treatment and see it for yourself.

Listen to these grateful words: "My nose cleared, my foul breath left me, the continual succession of colds, the crusts in my nose, that bad taste in the mouth mornings, the dull headachy feelings in my forehead, the constant desire to clear my throat, all these vanished. They all went, one by one, some faster, some slower, but all equally sure. I once more have that joyous, lively feeling, same as I had in the glad days of youth, free from all care and pain." **Wouldn't you like to be in that happy condition?**

A PRESENT FOR YOU

Remember, I make this offer of a free gift, wholly from my desire to do you good. I want no money for it; you will be under no obligation to me whatsoever

Now, Reader, this is the opportunity of a lifetime, let it slip and you may never have such another again Don't neglect it, just write today. Send a postal card or your full name and address in a letter, and you will have one of these famous Threefold treatments by return mail

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GENTLE JABS.

Doing something well is doing much.

Fretting is a perpetual confession of weakness.

Success never comes to a man who is afraid to risk failure.

A man can walk a mile without moving more than two feet.

If you have talent for criticism don't fail to use it on yourself.

This season, as usual, the nobbiest thing in shoes is a bunion.

If a man falls in love, only the woman in the case can rescue him.

He is a wise farmer who never harrows the feelings of his wife.

Not by strength but by perseverance are great works accomplished.

The king can do no wrong—if the other fellow holds all the aces.

She who fishes for a husband seldom catches one who is worth while.

Many a man is out of work for the simple reason that there is no work in him.

Don't be dissatisfied with your lot. Hang on to it and wait for a real estate boom.

People like to hear themselves talk because they usually talk about themselves.

"Haste makes waste" is an old motto, but a lazy one. You've got to hurry to keep up.

Don't put on too many airs as you float down life's stream; your little boat may capsize.

Warships—Vessels that should never be built with money taken from the sinking fund.

Experience teaches that people seldom hit a man when he is down. They usually jump on him.

Call a man a diplomat instead of a liar and he will be pleased; yet it may amount to the same thing.

Some people think three or four times before speaking once, and then never say anything worth listening to.

There are only two classes of women in the world—those who are married and those who are willing to be.

It is easier to make enemies than friends, but it is easier to get rid of friends than it is to get rid of enemies.

In making a goose Dame Nature required a lot of quills, but a man can make a goose of himself with only one quill.

Experience is a great teacher, but by the time it hands a man his diploma he is too old to make much use of his knowledge.

The workman who turns out a poor job is an improvement on the one who does nothing but stand around and make remarks.

WAR and WOMEN

THE THREE HILLS.

I.

There is a hill in England,
Green fields and a school I know,
Where the balls fly fast in summer,
And the whispering elm trees grow,
A little hill, a dear hill,
And the playing fields below.

II.

There is a hill in Flanders;
Heaped with a thousand slain,
Where the shells fly night and noontide,
And the ghosts that died in vain,
A little hill, a hard hill
To the souls that died in pain.

III.

There is a hill in Jewry,
Three crosses pierce the sky,
On the midmost He is dying
To save all those who die,
A little hill, a kind hill
To souls in jeopardy.

—Everard Owen.

❧

The Godmothers' League.

MRS. WILLIAM LEONARD DAVIS has formed an American Godmothers' League for American soldiers on lines similar to those of British and French organizations. This organization will supply necessary comforts to our soldiers fighting in the trenches, but, unlike most other American organizations working toward the same end, there will be a personal touch to the gifts from the American Godmothers. Each woman who sends a parcel is asked to inclose a self-addressed envelope with it so that the soldier recipient can make a personal reply. She is also urged to keep up a regular correspondence with him and send him a regular monthly supply of necessities thru the Godmothers' League.

MRS WM LEONARD DAVIS

Parcels intended for our soldiers abroad should be addressed plainly and sent by parcel post to "American Godmothers' League," New York County Chapter Red Cross, No. 121 West Twentieth Street, New York City. In case of the death of the particular soldier a parcel is intended for, the League will pass it on to some other soldier who will send an acknowledgment to the donor.

Volunteers are asked to send a first parcel as soon as possible and another on the first of each current month. Among the articles that may be sent are knitted sweaters, mufflers, helmets, socks, wristlets, flannel underwear, flannel shirts (khaki colors), braces, leather shoe laces, a box of automatic buttons, colored pocket handkerchiefs, assorted safety pins, wrist watch, writing pad and envelopes and many more. Any one wishing more information can communicate with Mrs. Davis at 570 Park avenue, New York City. Mrs. Davis wishes every one writing to her to inclose a stamped self-addressed envelope, for she is doing the clerical work herself with the aid of volunteers, and does not wish to burden the League with office expenses.

❧

THE "SHIELD OF SERVICE."

The Summit, New Jersey Canning unit was the first working unit of women to wear the Hoover "Shield of Service" uniform. The canning unit, which was begun by the Summit Equal Franchise League, is a demonstrable proposition. It has enlisted the interests of several scores of Summit housewives, who have been taught the newest canning methods under the guidance of an expert demonstrator from the State Agricultural College.

Some of these women want to vote, some of them don't, but they all wanted to can. So the unit became a community affair, and the suffragists, who had emptied their very tiny treasury to corner glass jars for the enterprise, did the handsome thing, and stacked their suffrage banners behind a screen to give the glad hand to their "anti" sisters.

Part of the outfit was the use of the public school kitchen, containing twenty little stoves where twenty clothes boilers hummed away cheerfully, sterilizing and making bacteria-proof all the "oats, peas, beans and barley" a-glowing in the back yards of Summit, New Providence, Shorthills, Catham, Milburn et al. Every Tuesday and Wednesday, housewives have taken their jars and their string beans and repaired to Lincoln School, where adepts have shown how the job may be done. "When you can pick up the jar by the lid without its falling apart, then you know you've got 'em germ proof," say the wise uns.

Late in July the unit began dehydrating, and you could carry a tomato as big as your fist to the canning center and bring it home so thin and dry it would look like a sheet of paper.

The Hoover Shield of Service Movement is an effort to secure the cooperation of housewives in food conservation. It is a patriotic organization with no membership dues and no subscription fees. Every woman, man, girl or boy is eligible for enrollment upon the signing of the pledge of the organization, which binds each to do all in her power to conserve the food supply by following the rules of the food administrator as laid down from time to time.

The uniform is a becoming affair, consisting of a long blue chambray apron with white collar and button-on cuffs. It is modeled on that of a Russian mujik. The cap is also a Russian cap, and both cap and blouse have as insignia a United States shield surrounded by wheat-sheaves.

❧

OUR DEBT TO WOMEN.

A recent issue of the Public (New York) is devoted to woman suffrage. Articles are contributed by Anna Howard Shaw, chairman of the woman's committee of the Council of National Defense; Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National Woman Suffrage Association, and others. The Public says editorially:

The story of what women have done and are doing in the great war will some day be written adequately, and we shall have then a great epic of sacrifice, courage and devotion. It will be the story of unshaken faith and stoic endurance no less than a story of dashing initiative and dramatic heroism. The Russian battalion of death and the British nurse facing the German firing squad without flinching will furnish its dramatic episodes. But its pages will be no less glorified by the spirit of the millions who toiled and waited at home—the millions of "average" women whose unweakened morale, month after month, year after year, heartened the men in the trenches and strengthened their determination to "see it thru." French statesmen have testified that it was the women at home they watched most anxiously for any sign of wavering. With them rested, finally, the decision whether the allied nations should compromise with the regime that exalts brute force, or fight on until it was finally and utterly discredited. Their answer has been never in doubt. With the unerring intuition of their sex, the women of the democracies have recognized in Prussianism something that must be driven from the earth at all costs. Their very loathing of bloodshed and brutality has steeled them to hold out, determined that no future generation shall be called upon to face the horrors they have endured. The great war has presented an issue that is peculiarly a woman's issue. It is not without significance that the rulers of Prussia have preached Kirche, Kinder, Kuchen (Church, Children, Cooking), for generations. It is not meaningless that we hear of women heroes in every belligerent nation except Germany. That country has been of an unmitigated masculinity thruout these blood-drenched years. The nation that caused this war is not merely the nation distinguished by an autocratic government, by suppression of the individual in the interests of the state. It is also the nation distinguished for the subordinate place given to women in its social and political life.

To say that women should be placed on a plane of political equality with men is to say a thing so obvious today that the need of saying it is exasperating. Every stale argument against it has been removed, dramatically and finally, by what women have done in the allied countries, by what they are doing in America today. The votes of women will keep us out of war only when to enter it would mean aggression, as in Mexico last year. The votes and brawn and brains, even the blood, of women will be valiantly for war when war means an opportunity to free the world of aggression and violence. The real democrat needs no evidence of what women suffrage will accomplish. It is a part of democracy. Democracy means self-government for the individual as for the nation. In its subjective effect on the individual it has its supreme justification. If women were less capable than men of meeting political responsibility, as they have proved that they are not, it would be only another reason for giving it them. This is the ultimate raison d'etre of democracy—to improve the individual. Only the foolish Nietzschia in and out of Potsdam, thinks it can be done any other way than the way of democracy. Our self-respect as a nation is compromised by every day in which Congress delays the enactment of this national obligation.

❧

Unnatural History.

Teacher—"What animal is it that is web-footed?"

Johnny—"The spider, miss."

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FAIRY CORNER

REFORMED.

Peter Rabbit washed his fur,
And picked out every single burr.
"A-hem," went Peter with a cough,
And stepped outside just to show off.

Mrs. Peter, full of worry,
Sent for Doctor in a hurry,
When Doctor Quack appeared in sight,
Peter turned and ran in fright

To the swamp "As light'ning speeds,"
And jumped right in among the weeds,
He got his paws all sopping wet,
And made his white fur black like jet.

Then back he ran in happy glee,
From troubled thoughts now safely free,
"Never again," thought Peter Rabbit,
"Will I encourage the cleaning habit."

❧

A Strange Day.

Tommy Tucker was very fond of cookies and he ate a great many. Every day he carried one to school in his little brown lunch basket to eat at recess. He ate two for lunch at home and one or two for an afternoon tea party and several more at supper time. Every single person in Mother Goose Village had a special sort of cooky which she always made for Tommy Tucker and which Tommy Tucker especially liked.

There were the big brown ginger cookies that Old Mother Hubbard made, the sweet, crispy sugar cookies that Dame Trot made. There were the animal cookies cut in the shape of dogs, cats, hens and chickens that dear old Mother Goose made, and then there were the cookies his own mother made, all covered with white icing.

It was a beautiful summer day that all the strange things happened to Tommy Tucker. He was dressed in his clean pink suit and he wore his new straw hat. Mother Tucker kissed him and Grandma Tucker tucked the little brown lunch basket into his hand. In the basket were two of Old Mother Hubbard's big brown ginger cookies wrapped in a little white napkin.

At recess Tommy Tucker went out into the school yard with the other children. He sat down in a corner and unwrapped his cookies. Then he saw a little boy looking at him. It was the Little Boy Who Lived Down in the Lane. He wore a ragged coat and sat in the back seat at school, but he always wore a smile all over his round freckled face.

Tommy Tucker looked at the round ginger cookies and then he looked at the little boy.

"You can have one of my cookies," he said.

The little boy took the cooky and ate every crumb.

"Would you like another cooky?" Tommy Tucker asked politely.

"Thank you," he said. "You see, I didn't have any breakfast."

That was only the first strange thing that happened to Tommy Tucker that morning. When he went home he found Little Miss Muffet. She was going to have lunch with him, for her mother had gone up to Boston town to do some shopping. Mother Tucker had laid a luncheon for them on the little porch table, sandwiches, cocoa and a whole plate of Mother Goose's own animal cookies. As soon as Little Miss Muffet and Tommy Tucker sat down at the table Little Miss Muffet spied the funny little cookies.

"Oh, Tommy Tucker," she cried, "you know I just love cookies! You eat the sandwiches and I'll eat the cookies." And Little Miss Muffet drew the plate of cookies right over to her side of the table.

"All right!" said Tommy Tucker, and he ate all the bread-and-butter sandwiches and Little Miss Muffet ate all of the cookies. That was the second strange thing that happened to Tommy Tucker. After Little Miss Muffet had gone home, Tommy Tucker went out into the garden.

"Here's a cooky, Tommy," called Mother Tucker.

Tommy took the cooky. How good it did look! He ran down the garden path with the cooky in his hand, and there he met the Little Red Hen.

"Cluck-cluck! Cluck-cluck!" clucked the Little Red Hen, jumping for her share of the cooky.

"All right! Take it all!" said Tommy Tucker, and he gave the last half of the crispy cooky to the Little Red Hen.

That was the third strange thing that happened to Tommy Tucker.

When supper time came Mother Tucker gave Tommy Tucker a big bowl of bread and milk and just one cooky—but such a cooky! It was covered with sugary white frosting and right in the center was a big plump raisin. Now Tommy Tucker was going to have his cooky. He ate all of his bread and milk, and was just going to take a bite out of that wonderful frosted cooky when he felt a soft scratch-scratch on his foot. It was Little Dog Tray, Tommy Tucker's own dog. Tommy Tucker always shared his supper with Little Dog Tray, but now there wasn't a single bit of supper left except the cooky. Tommy Tucker looked at the cooky and then he looked at Little Dog Tray.

"Here, Tray! Speak for it, sir!" he said.

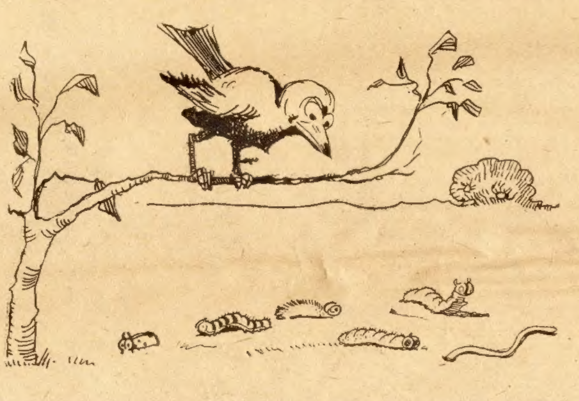
Little Dog Tray sat up on his hind legs and barked, and Tommy Tucker tossed the frosted cooky with the raisin in the middle right into Dog Tray's pink mouth.

That was the fourth strange thing that happened to Tommy Tucker.

When bedtime came on that strange day, Tommy Tucker's mother tucked him into bed and kissed him good night, and the last strange thing happened. He suddenly felt as full as if he had eaten all the ginger cookies and all the animal cookies and the crispy cookies and the wonderful frosted cooky with the raisin in the middle, and just as jolly as if he had been to Boston town or to see the Man in the Moon, and just as happy as a boy could possibly feel.

"Why, Tommy Tucker," said Mother Tucker, bending over him, "you seem so happy today. What have you been doing?"

"I gave away all my cookies," said Tommy Tucker.



The Early Bird—"Just my luck! And I've adopted the no breakfast plan, too!"

❧

Serving His Country.

"You can't join. You are not big enough."

Tears filled the eyes of Rufus Miller, as he listened to old Colonel Choate. Rufus had learned that the patriotic Civil War veteran was organizing the boys of Mayville into a home guard battalion and he had at once determined to join.

Several thoughtless boys, already members of the battalion and clothed in their snug fitting uniforms, snickered noisily.

"But I'm old enough," Rufus persisted. "I'm past 14."

Colonel Choate measured the applicant with a keen eye.

"Maybe you are," he admitted, "but you don't look it. We're forming this battalion for work—real service—not for child's play."

Dejectedly, Rufus left the large council hall, where the headquarters of the battalion had been temporarily located.

He entered the small cottage in which he and his mother dwelt. His father's death had occurred several years ago, following a railroad accident in which he had been fatally injured. With the money he left the little cottage had been purchased, and his mother provided for herself and Rufus with the wages she received working in Colonel Choate's mill.

Mrs. Miller suspected something was amiss.

"You haven't been fighting, Rufus?" she inquired anxiously, for she never had known her son to engage in disorder of any kind.

"No, mother," he answered, vainly trying to keep back his sobs, "but Colonel Choate won't let me serve my country. He refused to admit me in the battalion. He said I wasn't big enough."

Mrs. Miller attempted to comfort her son.

"Don't worry, Rufus," she said. "You don't need Colonel Choate's consent to serve your country. Perhaps you'll get the chance. And you must not despair, for only cowards do that."

Rufus hurriedly ate his supper and made his way out of doors. He would not go near the council hall, where a throng of boys was congregated, all members of the battalion, for he knew he could not endure the sight. He approached the mill owned by Colonel Choate. Here his attention was attracted by the mysterious antics of two men near a basement window.

Coming closer, he heard one man ask the other: "Where's the pile of shavings?" Instantly Rufus realized the pair was up to mischief, and surmised they were attempting to set fire to the mill.

Stealthily he made his way back to the road and started in flight for the council hall. Breathlessly he fell into the arms of Colonel Choate, who, at the time was busy drilling the youthful recruits.

"Quick! Send men to the mill! They're trying to set fire to it," he managed to say.

More than a score of men, and a much larger number of boys, enrolled in the battalion, rushed in the direction of the mill. They arrived in time to grasp the two miscreants and extinguish the blaze that they had started in the basement. The mill contained a large quantity of cloth to be made into uniforms for the newly enlisted soldiers and sailors, and it would have been consumed if the detection of the blaze had been delayed but for a short time.

After the evildoers had been placed in a cell, the Colonel called for Rufus.

Needless to say, Rufus became a full-fledged member of the battalion, and it was not long before he was appointed to an official position in the troop. And Colonel Choate, to show his personal appreciation for what Rufus had done in saving the mill, gave him a position in the mill at a salary that kept him and his mother in comfort.

❧

YOUR DOLLIES' SHOES.

Perhaps you have sometimes wondered who makes all the shoes for the thousands of dollies that are dressed each year for the shops. Some of these little articles of the dollies' wear are made in factories where other toy articles are made. In Bridgeport, Conn., they have a factory which does nothing else the year round but make doll shoes. It is said to be the only factory in the world that makes nothing but doll shoes. It is not a small place, but a big building where a great many people work all day long stitching and cutting and working the machines which turn out hundreds of pairs of doll shoes in a day.

You know you can buy shoes for your doll in the shops that are made of kid, velvet, or felt. Some of them are big enough to fit baby sister. But the more expensive ones are as carefully made as any you could buy for the baby.

❧

A BRAVE MOTHER CAT.

Minnie, a mother cat with five kittens, had found what she considered a fine home for her babies in an opening under a boiler in the office building where she lived. When the janitor shook down the furnace, hot ashes and glowing coals fell on the kittens. Fortunately Minnie was near by. She sprang into the burning hole, and one by one rescued the kittens. Not one was injured, but Minnie was badly burned.

❧

NOT THERE.

Farmer Brown—"Look, here, mister, the war map you sold me ain't correct!"

Shopkeeper—"Really! How do you know that?"

Farmer Brown—"My boy has written home, and says he's just going to Reconnoiter. But I'm hanged if I ean find the placed marked on the map!"

THE PANGOLIN.

"It's a queer land," he said,
Hitchin' his chair up close beside my bed—
Says Uncle Ned
To me, a-lyin' there broke out with measles;
"Yes, sir! Pekans, and weasles"
(And then he winked at me and waved his hand),
"They're there, and dingo dogs, and kangaroos,
And koodoos—many a band;
And in the mornings early
Come creeping home aye-ayes and kinkajous
(Their tails, of course, are curly),
And wallabys, that tumble in the sand;
And one clear day I saw a cacomistle
Put up his back, and bristle
As if he meant to whistle,
High in a tree-top in that wondrous land.

"But none," says Uncle Ned, "within
The wild can match the pangolin—
A beast extraordinary—
A ring-tailed, rough-scaled pangolin,
Should he upon his scales begin
To sound his music merry.

"I own I never had
Any great liking for the aoudad,"
Says he, slow-like, and smoothin' down the cover;
"And when you meet a wan hamadryad,
Or matamata all in armor clad
(An armadillo isn't half as bad),
It makes you creep all over!
I've met 'em all, all, in that wondrous land.
Or when a gray-haired vansire you may see
Stand on his head in boyish gayety,
And, watching silent nigh,
A solemn sassaby,
It gives you feelings you can't understand.
But if it comes to duty,"
Says Uncle Ned, "and just plain everyday
Kindness, and homely little tasks, I say—
Without a thought of beauty—
Give me the ungkaputi!

"His scales they look like discs of tin
That down his sides run out and in,
In lines that seldom vary;
But when he thumps them, thick and thin,"
Says Uncle Ned, "the pangolin
Has airs extraordinary.

"Then, there's the axolotl,"
Says Uncle Ned, "whose very name would throttle
A spelling-bee; the big-eyed douroucouli
Romps with his fellows woolly,
And the red howlers, pottos, and unaus,
Make the night hideous 'mid the leafy bough
Till daylight finds them, or the binturong
Snarls at their heels. Yet, all these beasts among,"
My uncle says, "with names you cannot spell—
Addax, and sapajou, and sewellel,
Banxring, and balisaur,
Angwantibo and gaur—
Not one is there, all that wild world within,
Equals the pangolin.

"And him you'll see, with kith and kin,"
He says, says he, "if you'll look in
The big red dictionary—
The jangling, wrangling pangolin
That up and down his scales of tin
Goes running, mad and merry."

—William Hervey Woods in St. Nicholas,

❧

THE MOUNTAIN ASH.

Long ago people believed in witches and evil spirits, who were going about the country doing harm. They also believed that the rowan (mountain ash) had some charm to do away with their evil powers.

So all the maidens wore the scarlet berries of the rowan in their hair, and the young men carried canes made from the branches of the same tree. The housewife hung branches of the berries over her doorway, while her good man hung the same about his barns and stables, so the witches could have no power over his sheep and cattle and horses.

For the same purpose they kept a great hoop of rowan branches. Thru this they made the young calves and lambs jump. This act was intended to keep sickness and death away from them—at least the good man thought so. Every animal had to jump thru the hoop whether he wanted to or not, for the good man switched his legs with a rowan switch until the jumping was accomplished.

❧

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

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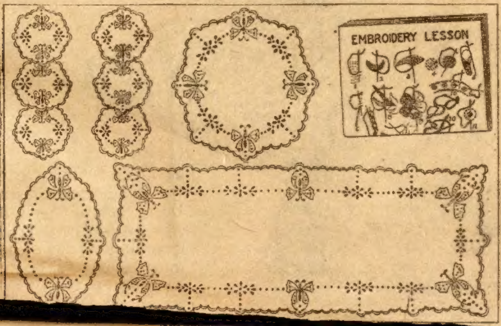

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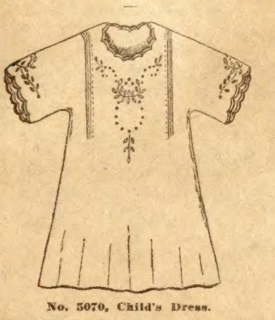
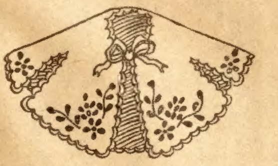


No. 5070, Child's Dress.

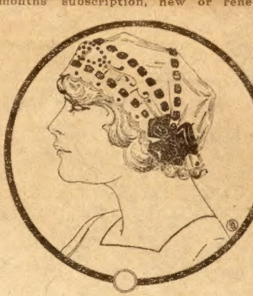
NO. 5070, CHILD'S DRESS—Beautifully designed and stamped on 1½ yards of white lawn or nainsook. We include three skeins of cotton floss for embroidering design. Sent with one year's subscription, new or renewal, to the new Blade for $1.50, or one year's subscription to the new Ledger for $1.50.



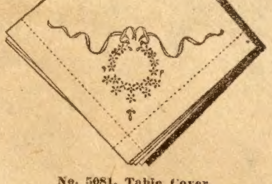
No. 2005, Baby's Kimono.

NO. 2005, BABY'S KIMONO—Conventional design, is stamped on white linen. We also include three skeins of cotton floss for embroidering the design. This will be given for $1.00 for eight months' subscription, new or renewal, to either the new Blade or the new Ledger.

NO. 4038, BOUDOIR CAP—Stamped on a fine grade of white lawn, this boudoir cap makes a very pleasing effect. Just the thing for morning wear. We include four skeins of floss for working design. This will be sent for $1.00 for eight months' subscription, new or renewal, to either the new Blade or the new Ledger.



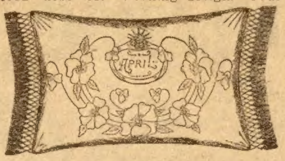
No. 4038, Boudoir Cap.



No. 5081, Table Cover.

NO. 5081, TABLE COVER—White linen hemstitched cover, size 24x24 inches, stamped with a simple design for French and eyelet embroidery. This table cover will be sent to you for only $1.50 in subscriptions to the new Blade or the new Ledger.

NO. 5060, BIRTH MONTH PILLOW TOP.—The latest and most striking birth month design pillow top you ever saw on 17x21-inch tan ticking. Remember there are no two designs alike in this offer. For instance, if your request is for a "July Birth Month Pillow" it will be tinted in exact colors, symbolic of the birthstone and flower of that month, and so on. We also include in this offer a back and four skeins of colored floss for working design. Your choice of any birth month pillow top complete for a one year's subscription to the new Blade at $1.50, or one year's subscription to the new Ledger for $1.50. State the month you wish.



No. 5060, Birth Month Pillow Top.

* * *

Real Impudence.

"Germany's calm admission that she was quite justified in offering Texas and New Mexico to Mexico if that country would attack us—well, Germany reminds me here of the impudent diner-out."

The speaker was a Senator, the occasion a luncheon in Cambridge.

"This diner-out," he continued, "dined one evening in a circle that was new to him. He took a charming lady down to dinner, and from the caviare to the teal he amused her, in his famous way, with the marital difficulties of the Brown-Browns. The Brown-Browns, it was plain from his narrative, must before long air their difficulties in the divorce court.

"'Funny, isn't it?' said the diner-out, as the alligator pear salad camé on, and he looked at his charming companion with a smile.

"'Yes,' she said, 'it's awfully funny, really, and perhaps it will interest you to know that I am Mrs. Brown-Brown.'

"The diner-out smiled in his turn.

"'Really,' he said. 'Then, tell me, have I got all the details right?'"

* * *

A Quandary.

Nell—"Oh, dear, I'm in such a quandary."

Bell—"What is it?"

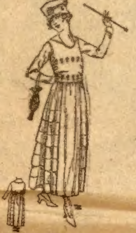
Nell—"Jack promises to stop drinking if I marry him and Tom threatens to begin if I don't."

PATTERN COUPONS FREE!

Hundreds of Patterns to Select From

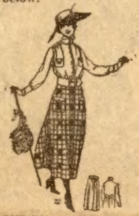
The great difficulty in making one's own garments is to get suitable patterns. Our women readers could make many pretty and useful things for themselves and their children if they could get well-made patterns. We have arranged to give our readers a pattern service unexcelled.

We have a splendid offer of the best and most fashionable patterns that can be produced by the greatest designers of New York and Paris, and what is more, these patterns will be within the reach of every one, and every one will have a wide selection to choose from **Read our splendid offer below.**



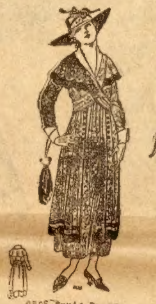
9549 Tie-On Bodice 34 to 42 Bust.

9550 Tucked Skirt 24 to 32 Waist.

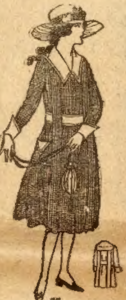


9479 Blouse with Convertible Collar. 34 to 42 bust.

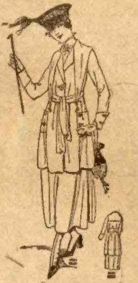
9482 Three-Piece Skirt 24 to 34 waist.



9525 Tunic Dress 16 and 18 years.

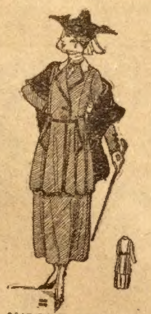


9547 Girls Dress 6 to 14 Years.



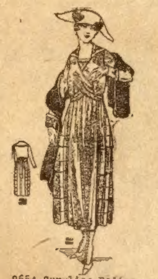
9551 Coat With Scarf Collar. 34 to 42 Bust.

9539 Two-Piece Skirt 24 to 36 Waist.



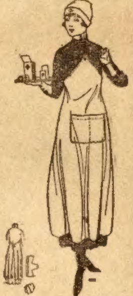
9548 Double Breasted Coat 34 to 42. Bust.

9539 Two-Piece Skirt 24 to 36 Waist.



9554 Surplice Bodice 34 to 42, bust.

9550 Tucked Skirt 24 to 32 waist.



9524 Nurses Cap and Apron. one size.

HOW TO GET THE FREE PATTERNS

To every one who will send us $1.50 for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of the Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us one of the coupons and it will be sent to you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

SELECT PATTERNS AS YOU NEED THEM.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making, with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc., so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modistes of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

We treat old and new customers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber send in $1.50 and we will send you the five pattern coupons and extend your subscription one year from the time it now expires.

No woman should be without the Ledger's Pattern Coupons.

........................CUT THIS OUT AND SEND TO US........................

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Inclosed please find $1.50 for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. This entitles me to five Pattern Coupons.

NAME. ....

If you wish any pattern from those advertised in this issue, mark the number and size on the margin and we will retain a coupon for each pattern we send you when we send you the Coupon Book. (Order by size and number.) **Coupons good for six months.**

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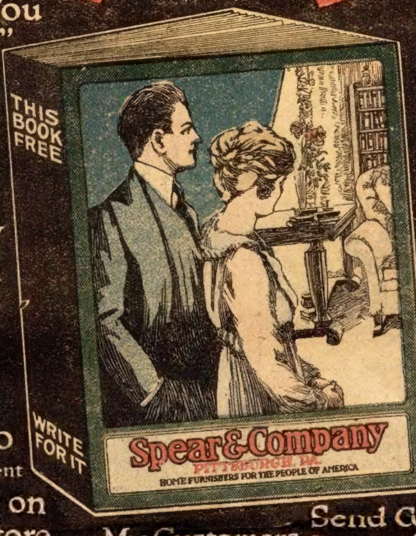

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You take no risk when you deal with Spear. Every article I sell is sent on 30 Days' Trial in your own home. You must be pleased or we want you to return the goods. And [illegible] are no strings to this offer.

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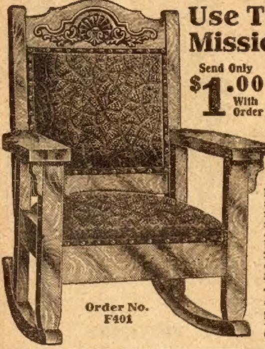
It will pay you to join the Immense Army of Spear customers. Satisfaction, safety, and saving are guaranteed.

Write for New 1918 Catalogue. It pictures and describes Hundreds of Bargains in Everything for the Home.



Order No. F401

Use This Comfortable Mission Rocker 30 Days

Send Only **$1.00** With Order

No home can have too many rockers. Here is a comfortable, well-built article at a very low price. This mission design rocker is not an ordinary commonplace design. The Queen Anne ornament on the back gives it an individuality which adds greatly to its appearance.

It is honestly built and will give long service. Made from solid select oak, in a practical Fumed Oak finish, fits in well with any class of furnishings. The seat has a strong spring support, covered with thick, sanitary upholstering materials which insure comfort. The wide arms, high upholstered back, and broad seat are features which make this Queen Anne Mission Rocker an exceedingly desirable article. Seat and back covered with Brown Spanish Artificial Leather of a quality that will wear for years.

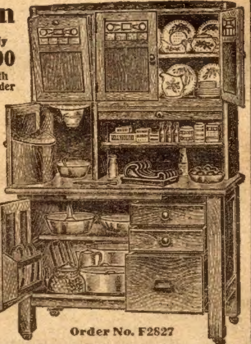
Terms: $1. Cash, 50c per Month —Total Price Only - - - $4.95

Use This Kitchen Cabinet 30 Days

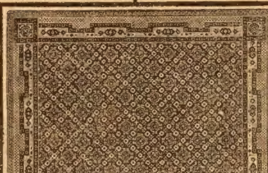
Send Only **$1.00** with Order

Your chance to get a high-class, serviceable, and practical Kitchen Cabinet at a price considerably below the average. In construction, appearance, and utility it is the Greatest Money's Worth you ever saw. Solid Golden Oak throughout, with durable, sanitary aluminum work-top—size 26x41 inches. Rust-proof 45-pound metal sifter flour bin, large cupboard space for dishes, 8-pound convenient sugar bin, roll curtain covering compartment for spices, extracts, etc. Base of cabinet has roomy cupboard for utensils—pan and lid rack on door, two easy sliding drawers for cutlery, towels, etc., large bread and cake drawer, and kneading board measuring 17½x21 inches. Doors with fancy glass double strength inserts. Will save hundreds of steps daily. Will rapidly pay for itself in the saving of time, motions, nerves, health. Sent on 30 days' trial and use. Easy terms of $1 cash and $2 a month. First payment and all freight charges will be refunded if not satisfied.

Terms: $1. Cash, $2. per Month —Total Price Only - - - $18.45



Order No. F2827

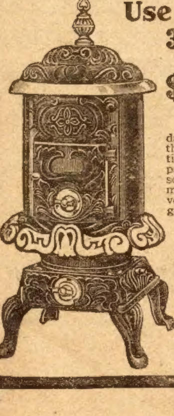


Sanitary Waterproof RUG

Here is a sanitary, seamless **rug**, made of new waterproof material. A pretty, desirable pattern in pleasing colors. Made so well that it will cling closely to the floor without expanding or curling. This new-process material looks like the finest oil cloth, but is superior to linoleum or oil cloth. Sent on 30 days' trial, on our easy terms of **$1 cash and $1 per month.**

No. F5033, size 6 ft. x 9 ft. Price....$3.65

No. F5033, size 9 ft. x 12 ft. Price....$8.95



Use This Oak Heater 30 Days

Send Only **$1.00** With Order

Completely equipped; ready to set up. Has cast-iron fire pot, with heavy front, top and base, attractively designed, full nickel trimmed and guaranteed to give entire satisfaction. Has a complete set of dampers which insure easy regulation of the heat, and economy in fuel consumption. Shaking and dump grate. The nickel parts include foot rails, top ring, urn and screw dampers. This heater is well mounted, has strong steel body, and convenient feed and ash pit doors. It is a good, practical and serviceable low-priced Junior Oak.

MADE IN THREE SIZES

No. F13 is 45 in. high with 12 in. fire pot,	**Price $**	**6.85**
No. F15 is 48 in. high with 14 in. fire pot,	**"**	**8.95**
No. F17 is 53 in. high with 16 in. fire pot,	**"**	**11.95**

Shipped on 30 Days' Trial and Use

Terms: $1.00 Cash with Order, $1.50 per Month on Any Stove

Important Be sure to order the right size. It is always better to order a heater a little too large than one too small. Practical experience has proved that the larger stove really radiates more heat on a smaller consumption of fuel, and is therefore more economical to operate.

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